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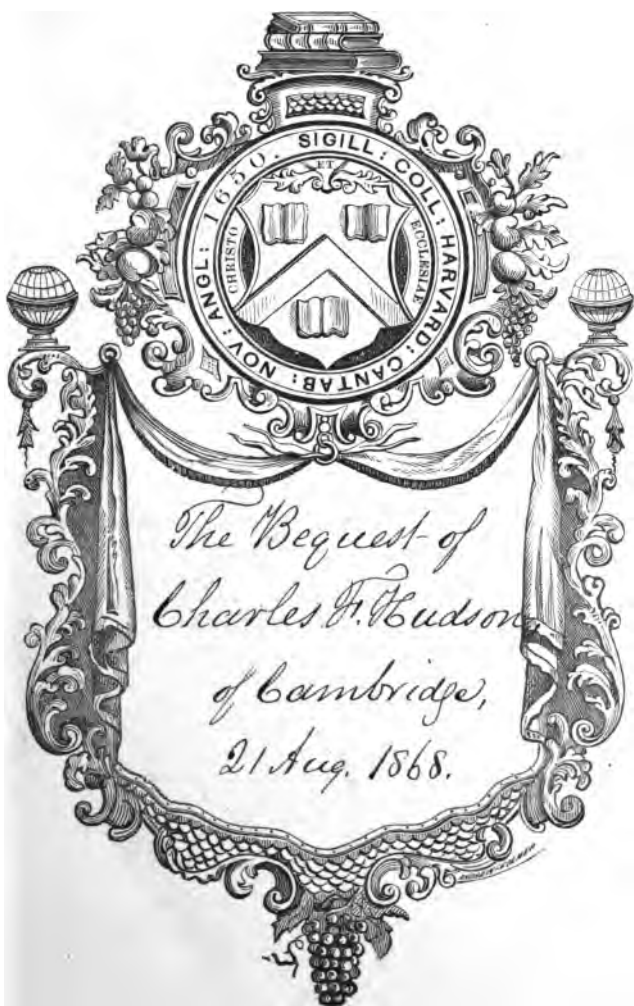
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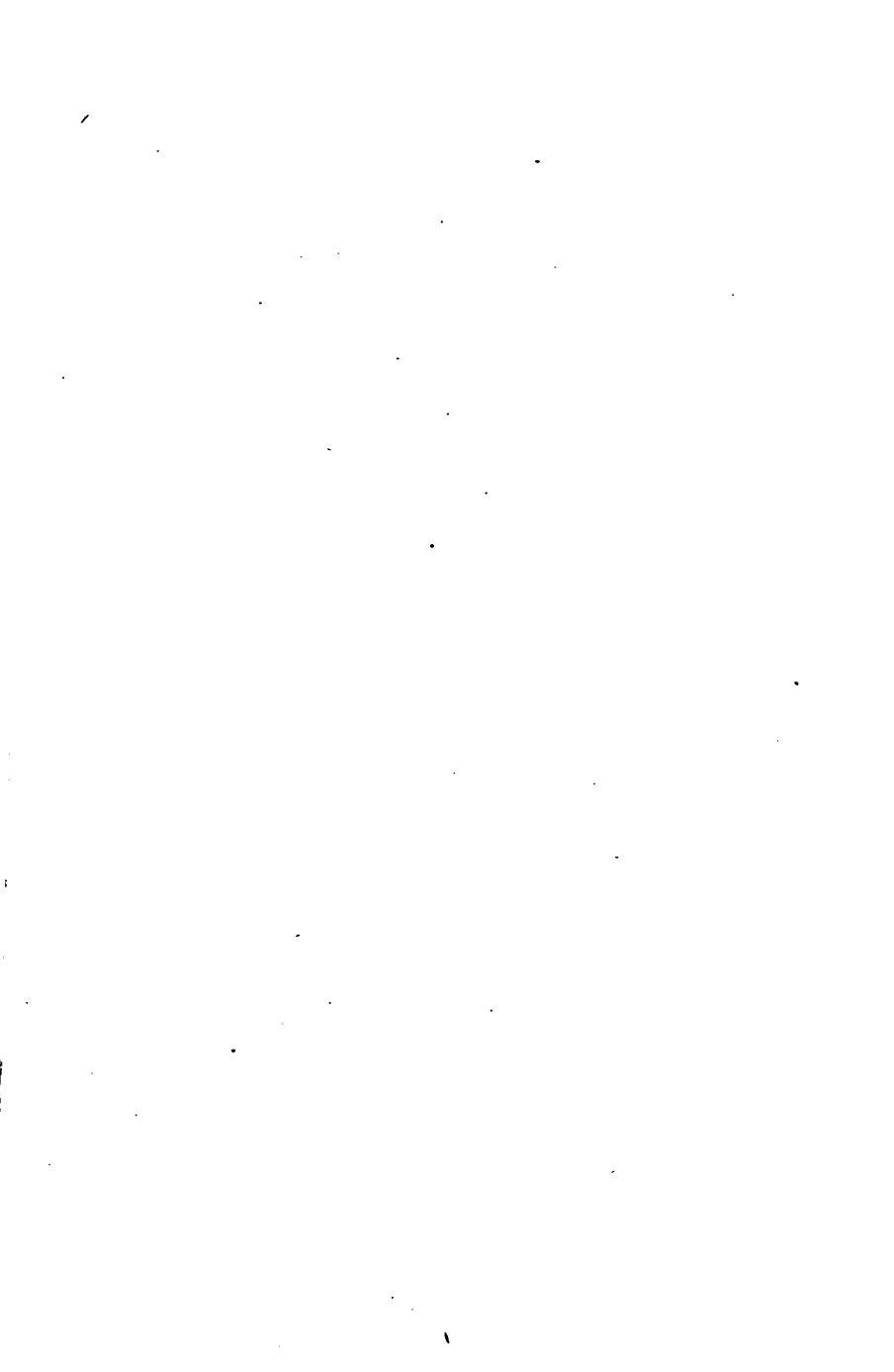
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W. S. L.

Feb. 28. 5 p.









# BIBLICAL TRINITY.

BY THEOPHILUS. *per idem.*

*With a Letter to the author  
by Horace Bushnell.*

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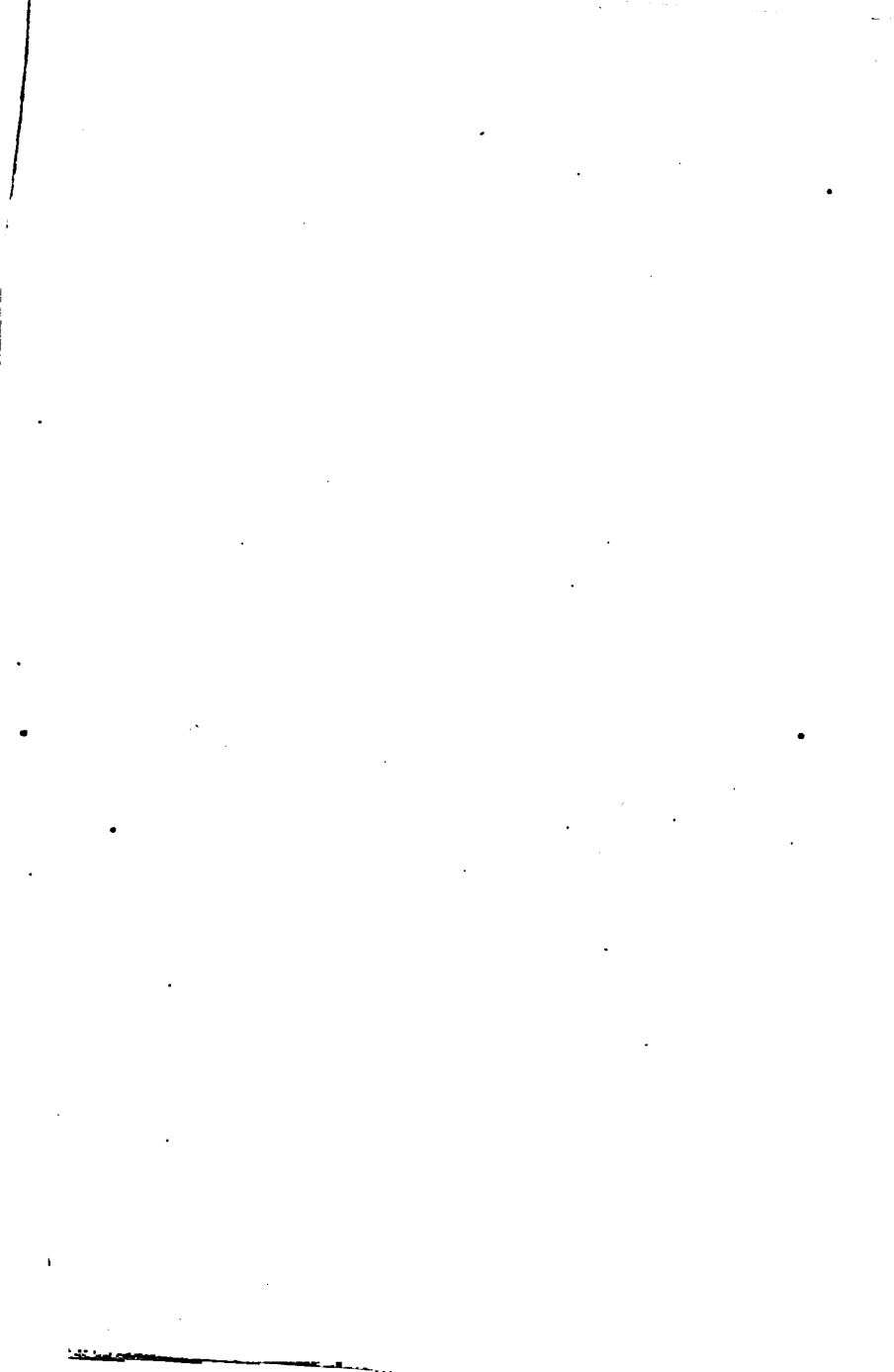
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12

TO  
ALL CHRISTIANS  
WHO REVERE  
DIVINE TRUTH  
MORE THAN THE DOGMAS OF SCHOOLS;  
WHO, RECEIVING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES  
AS A SUFFICIENT RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE,  
BOW TO THE AUTHORITY OF NO OTHER CREED;  
AND WHO, THINKING FOR THEMSELVES,  
ALLOW ALL OTHERS TO ENJOY THAT SOUND BIRTH-RIGHT,  
UNMOLESTED BY BIGOTRY, SUPERSTITION,  
ANTIQUATED ERROR OR ARROGANT POWER;  
THIS HUMBLE VOLUME  
IS  
FRATEERNALLY AND CONFIDINGLY  
INSCRIBED,  
BY ONE WHO IS CONSCIOUS  
OF NO HIGHER AMBITION OR AIM  
THAN TO BE OF THEIR NUMBER, AND WITH THEM  
GLORIFY GOD;  
BEING SANCTIFIED BY HIS SPIRIT THROUGH THE TRUTH,  
AND REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF  
HIS SON.

MAY, 1850.



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## LETTER TO THE AUTHOR.

*By* Horace Bushnell.

DEAR SIR,

You ask me, for reasons best known to yourself, my opinion of your book, entitled, "A BIBLICAL TRINITY." If I had the vanity to imagine that my opinion would alter yours, I should either give it with less freedom, or not give it at all. The subject of your volume is one with which, in its many learned aspects, you are much more familiar than myself; and doubtless your own mind is made up with deliberation, and, I might add, unchangeably, if the saying is true, that "there is no hope of a man who has written a book."

You ask, moreover, for my opinion *without personal favor or affection*. This caveat is quite superfluous; for I could not persuade myself to praise or blame any book for its author's sake, whatever might be its subject; but especially a work which treats of so great and glorious a theme as that of the Divine nature in any of its manifestations to our race. I need not say to you, sir, that as there is no subject so vast and sublime, so there is none in respect to which we have so great and so constant an interest to know the truth, or so solemn a duty to express our real convictions whenever our views are not unreasonably asked for by others—a fact which in the present case I am at liberty to infer.

As, therefore, you expect me to deal frankly with you, and as I mean to justify the expectation, I say at once, that I have not yet sufficiently examined and considered the Trinity of the Scriptures as set forth in your book, to express either my belief or disbelief as to its entire correctness, or as to the entire consistency of the statement of it. Nevertheless, I am free to say, that the theories on which you animadvert are, in my opinion, liable at least to all the objections, both from reason and Scripture, which you urge against them. It is often much easier to expose the errors of a false system, than to build up simple truth on its ruins. Many absurd theories of physical, mental and moral science have been demolished by men who have erected no substantial fabric in their stead. They did a good work, and performed all that could be reasonably required of them ; for it is a false and injurious notion, that error should not be exposed till truth is ready to supply its place. The world never can advance except as the obstructions to its progress are taken out of the way. And this principle is quite as true in the science of theology as in any other science whatever. Perhaps in none is it so lamentably true ; for certainly in none have more stupendous piles of error been accumulated for human reverence. Their vastness and antiquity have overawed inquiry, and, in an age comparatively free, cultivated superstition has walked hand in hand with severely disciplined reason. The world is, therefore, often quite as much indebted to resolute and true-hearted men, who, in spite of the frowns of theological potentates and ecclesiastical combinations, have explored and exposed time-hallowed absurdities, as to their less courageous successors, who, in the midst of little opposition and much encouragement, have made progress to remoter truths.

I presume you do not expect me, even if I think well of your book in the main, to coincide with all the views contained in it, for that would be much, very much, more than

happens to me in respect to any book of theology or ethics yet written by man. To my mind there is no more certain evidence of the imperfection of human knowledge and wisdom, than what is furnished by the writings of men who are regarded, and justly so, as among the wisest of their race. Even the shortest and most approved formularies of Christian doctrine, composed, revised, and amended by the collective wisdom of great and good men, as permanent standards and tests of essential faith, have been proper objects of distrust and dissent by other collections of men equally good and great, who, in their turn, have had no better success in attempting a like service for God and man. And if so, what hope can there be of infallibility for a whole volume, either yours or another's, devoted to a subject which has been in controversy among good men—most of them, like ourselves, not so good as they should have been—during nearly the whole of the time since the apostolic age,—a subject which has exercised the acutest, most learned, and best disciplined minds,—a subject, too, which has been most controverted in the most enlightened Christian nations, and where religious freedom has been most enjoyed, or rather, least trampled on.

But, notwithstanding such obstacles to the full endorsement of any multifarious volume of polemic or didactic theology, even the very best, and while I neither ask nor expect you to certify or assent to all the sentiments of this letter, I am constrained to say that I have examined your book with both pleasure and profit, and am persuaded that the same effects will be gratefully felt by many others whose minds are now drawn, or must soon be drawn, to the subject it treats of.

To begin with the beginning, I like the *title* of your volume—A BIBLICAL TRINITY. It has the merit of descriptive brevity, making known, in three words, exactly the subject which the book itself discusses and illustrates. But

leaving the name for the thing, I may safely predict that its simplicity, clear statement, directness, general candor, good temper, and evident good purpose will commend themselves, and so far ingratiate the substance of the work as to increase its chances of being read with candor and profit.

Your book has one characteristic which gives it a value, and which will, I trust, give it an attraction to many minds. I am acquainted with no single volume, so clear, comprehensive, untechnical, and accessible, that can supply its place in respect to the variety and amount of instruction it furnishes on the general subject to which it is devoted. While, except to adepts in the department of theology considered in your work, it will impart much instruction and important information, it will, also, be suggestive of other related truths, and will set in motion trains of thought that will carry forward inquiring minds to principles from whose approach they have been awed by the terrors of a frowning dogmatism.

What reception your book will meet with, it requires no supernatural gift to foretell. To know its subject, is to know its fate. That it will be despised and rejected by many, is as certain now as it will be a year hence. Neither honesty of purpose nor fidelity to truth will save any book from contumely that would unbind shackles sanctified by the authority of ages. That yours, therefore, will be cast out as evil by many, is a certainty about which you may set your heart at rest, if it has any disquieting doubt on the subject. That it will be welcomed by many is no less plain than its rejection.

On some of your topics you will allow me to make a few desultory remarks. And first,

In New England, at least, the day of earnest and comparatively free inquiry is already up, and no lowering clouds, however threatening, can shut it down. The wheel that never goes back is advancing with power and dignity,

as if conscious of bearing onward the majesty of truth. That so many well trained minds are at this moment calmly and conscientiously examining the great subject which your book considers,—that so many are reviewing their faith by the best lights, and that so many have already become dissatisfied with unintelligible or conflicting terms, and are using their own eyes instead of Nicene or Athanasian substitutes—these manifest and impressive facts demonstrate that the power of ecclesiastical prescription, however grave with age, is in a measure broken. Whatever resistance shall be made to the free investigation of the Scriptures, or the free expression of belief in their teachings, must, sooner or later, give way to the growing and irrepressible spirit of the age.

I am pleased to see in your book various documents and quotations, not elsewhere so readily accessible, collectively, which will interest and instruct many readers to whom they will be new, and also be at hand for reference by those to whom they are no strangers. Some of these extracts are of more than transient value, because they serve as striking permanent statements or illustrations of great truths and great errors, great principles and great delusions. Some of them illustrate, in a remarkable manner, the strength and weakness of the human mind—the subtleties and the frowardness of learning—the union of skepticism and credulity—and the intimate commixture of reason, faith, and superstition. I refer particularly to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, those superannuated fictions, which, for their power on past ages, will remain for ages to come, in the ecclesiastical museum, among the most prominent monstrosities which the curious will be called to contemplate. Of the two, the Athanasian Creed, though somewhat younger than the Nicene, and, indeed, its offspring, will nevertheless be looked upon as the more venerable curiosity—a sort of ecclesiastical Sphinx, whose riddles have puzzled and con-



founded the wise, by the philological precision and rhetorical grace of their irreconcilable antitheses and mutually demolishing contradictions.

I am particularly gratified to see among your valuable quotations, the "*Solemn Address to the Deity*" by Dr. Watts. I am gratified that you have given the whole of it ; for, as Dr. Johnson says of Bishop Burnet's *Life of Rochester*, "It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgment." While it illustrates well your subject, it is, both in its own ingenuous self and in its clandestine history, an instructive lesson—in the one an example of conscientious frankness, and in the other a notable specimen of well-meant bigotry and shortsighted prudence. That what may, perhaps, be considered as the most interesting single chapter in the history of Dr. Watts's mind and opinions should have been jealously suppressed for half a century, and that for another half century after a single copy had escaped to tell the fate of its consumed fellows, there should have been such a shyness of its publicity, cannot be accounted for with credit to the self-constituted guardians of Dr. Watts's reputation. The frustration of this kindly intended conspiracy to suppress what was essential to his true biography, by the massacre of all the witnesses to one of its most interesting and instructive events, is an admonition to such as would do God service by so questionable means. That abortive scheme of unwise friendship and piety, overruled by Divine providence, does but enhance the interest in what was so doomed and so preserved ; while it also reminds one of still greater combinations which, with kindred zeal for God and man, have taxed their wits and tasked their energies to chain down forever truths that will always struggle for the mastery, till they prevail.

You have noticed, I perceive, the attempt to create a prejudice against the *Solemn Address*, by the rumor that the author's mind was somewhat impaired at the time he

thus expressed his dissent from prevalent views, and his earnest solicitude to understand more clearly and fully what he believed might be known respecting the doctrine in question. It is no uncommon practice to impute to men in years a decay of mind, when their course is not agreeable to those who make the imputation. Especially is this likely to happen, when the person whose present sentiments are opposed has in some considerable degree changed his opinions. The offensive change, however carefully or wisely made, is almost sure to be attributed to mental decay by those who dislike it.

When a late eminent statesman a few years ago advocated, as a representative in Congress, the suppressed right of petition in a matter respecting which opposite views were entertained, the most reputable and influential presses filled the country with the rumor that his mind had become enfeebled by age. Nor was the rumor contradicted except by the universal admiration of what was felt by all to be the most remarkable exhibition of learning, logic, tact and eloquence ever displayed in the whole progress of his long public career. But for this exhibition of combined powers hitherto unmatched even by himself, and never by any one else on the same floor, the false rumor might ere this have been recorded on the page of history as a creditable truth. In the case of Watts, his Address itself may be relied upon to refute the story of his impaired understanding, though if more evidence were needed, the most competent witnesses have deposed to its soundness. It has on it the stamp of his own mind—the image of his own heart. Who can look at it without seeing his simplicity, his conscientiousness, his earnest love of truth, his discriminating use of language, his power of expression, his clear combinations of thought, his devout reverence for God, and, in short, the very make and genius of the man.

Nor is it uncommon for one person, in relating his own

particular experience, whether of the mind or of the affections, to express that of others who have not equal courage or conscientiousness to declare it themselves. Such an example of moral heroism in one of eminent gifts and virtues, serves as useful encouragement to the timid and the temporizing; for if virtues, as well as vices, were not *catching*, they would be too few to save the world from the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah. Independent, original virtue—that which is spontaneous as respects man—is among the rarest of jewels, and precious as it is rare. To break the chain of any error fastened on the mind almost from the beginning of its consciousness, to come out from habitual associations loved and revered, to separate one's self from the faith of many centuries and stand up against the anathemas of hoary tradition, to encounter one's own opinions proclaimed for many years to living and endeared assemblies and published to the world in one's own admired books, to expose one's self to a social atmosphere from which the accustomed sunshine is withdrawn and which it may never revisit—to do and endure all this in the fullness of one's honors, and when the infirmities of age need the support of more than wonted kindness, requires a fervent love of truth, the full strength of conscience, and a deep persuasion of the approval of God. Such appears to have been the magnanimity of Watts when, near the close of life and after mature deliberation, he determined to publish, as introductory to “A Faithful Inquiry after the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity taught by Christ and his Apostles,” the “Solemn Address” with which you have enriched your volume.

There is one embarrassment to a just consideration of your work by many who conscientiously seek for truth. It is the power of habitual impressions, made early and late, that the subject is too mysterious for human investigation. Under the power of this educated habit of mind, they are

awed from the proper use of their own understandings, and feeling that inquiry is vain and presumptuous, they shrink from the attempt and keep away from accessible truth.

It has been said a thousand times, and with an air of satisfied wisdom if not of magisterial rebuke, that what seems to be a contradiction in the doctrine of a tripersonal Godhead, is such only to our limited faculties ;—that God is infinite, and that, therefore, what is mysterious and irreconcilable to our limited understanding, may nevertheless be true, and be revealed to us as a credible truth ;—that it is presumptuous and rashly irreverent in such beings as we are, to take upon us to determine what may or may not be true in respect to a being whose nature is unlike ours, and confessedly past finding out.

But, however plausible this method of covering up the difficulty may be, and however satisfactory it may have been to others, for me it neither removes nor conceals the difficulty ; for what I object to is not the incomprehensibility of the Divine nature, whose perfections all must admit to surpass the comprehension of human or angelic minds, but it is the real and discernible inconsistency of the import of terms, the real and manifest contradictions of thought and sentiment, to which I demur, feeling confident, as I do and cannot but feel, that no vastness however great, that no immensity of any being, that no perfections even of the Divine Mind, can be large enough for an honest contradiction of language, for an appropriate conflict of thought, or for the admission of a faith that misplaces and supercedes the knowledge which comes from our own consciousness, from the evidence of our own senses, or from those simple convictions of reason which, as if inevitable by man, are universal to our race in every age and aspect of their being.

However inscrutable may be the Divine nature, whatever height or depth of mystery may pertain to it, for the exercise of our admiration and humility ; these things are, to

my mind, both plain and immoveable truths, viz., that in the Divine nature there can be nothing either contradictory to itself, or contradictory to human reason. There may and must be in the nature of the Infinite One, that which illimitably *transcends* the highest human reason—that which, when we attempt to search it out, not only baffles and discourages our weak endeavor, but makes us feel how unknowing we are, and compels us to bow with devout wonder before the incomprehensible majesty of eternal, infinite, all-knowing and all-sovereign Existence. But even while we are the most awed by the thought of his infinities, and the most humbled by the feeling of our own comparative nothingness, such views and feelings neither destroy nor at all disturb the conviction that our own reason must decide what is contradictory in human language, and that no perfections of the Godhead can require or justify our assent to any asserted harmony of conflicting terms—the vehicles of thought, and therefore not only a war of language, but a conflict of the sentiments which they legitimately, or by their proper force, convey.

If it is the wisdom and the glory of human reason, to confess that there are mysteries, eternal, unrevealable mysteries, in the Divine nature, and if this ever changeless truth lies at the foundation of intelligent and unceasing confidence in the Divine government, in the midst of all perplexities,—if it is this very truth that stills the tumult of our griefs and fears, and makes serene as it were the troubled atmosphere of our souls,—and if this calmness and serenity do but increase as we become more profoundly penetrated with the assurance of the mystery of the Godhead, so that when, to our vision, clouds and darkness envelop his throne, we feel security and gladness in the belief that he dwells in unapproachable and all-glorious light; even then our conviction does not fail or falter, that no mystery of the Divine nature, no impenetrable secret of the

Divine government, no supposable wisdom of a Divine revelation, can interpose to set aside what reason clearly teaches, what the senses actually know, or what consciousness, without argument and without delay, teaches us is reliable and sure.

No revelation, though miracle on miracle should cluster to sustain it, can persuade a rational mind, in the legitimate and due exercise of its powers, that a being can be present at the place from which he is at the same time absent, that two and three make six or exceed not four, that the whole of a thing is either more or less than all its parts, that freedom and constraint are predicable of one and the same thing, in one and the same particular, at one and the same time, that folly and wisdom are convertible terms, alike descriptive of an individual act, or that vice and virtue have the same qualities, universal vice and universal virtue alike tending to universal good.

Such propositions, coming from any quarter, or made, in whatever circumstances, to any being, would be false in themselves,—denials of truth, which no amount of testimony, from whatever source, can authenticate for our benefit,—conflicts, which no power finite or infinite can harmonize; and any accumulation of testimony, of whatever kind and from whatever seeming quarter, to their agreement, instead of changing our views, would beget distrust of such testimony, and reassure us of the fidelity of those original powers and resources of knowledge which belong to the condition and circumstances of our race, for their reliable employment and benefit so long as that constitution and those circumstances shall abide together.

That a subject, proper for man's condition, and especially one which demands his assent, reproves his doubt, and threatens his disbelief,—that such a subject is metaphysical, and in its nature subtle and abstruse, or that it has respect to an infinite being, gives no occasion for either unmeaning

or contradictory terms, whether in respect to what can or what cannot be known of it. The abstruseness and subtilty of such a subject, instead of excusing or being an occasion for insignificancy or looseness of language, would, for that very reason, seem to demand that the language used in any statement respecting it, should be definite, and express clear, precise, and intelligible ideas. And, surely, it is not creditable to say, in respect to a being whose nature is in part intelligible, and in part incomprehensible, that what is beyond our knowledge may therefore be spoken of contradictorily, or be spoken of more confusedly or less definitely than what is comprehensible by us. If there is need of speaking, there is need of being understood, and that whatever may be the nature of the subject spoken of.

Should any one tell me, no matter on what apparent authority, that three *beings*, each equal to either of the other two, are so united that they constitute but one being, equal only to each of the three, I am compelled to reject the statement as absurd and intuitively false; for the axiom, applied to physical science, that a part is less than the whole, or that the whole is greater than a part, is equally applicable to metaphysical or spiritual science. So long as the truth that three are more than one, or that three cannot be only one, is a truth irrespective and independent of the *nature* of the objects to which numbers are applied; so long must it be true that any statement assuming that they are or can be, in any strict and proper sense, equal, or in any strict and proper sense, identical, is absurd, and cannot be abstractly presented and really contemplated without instant and universal rejection. To say that three beings are *mysteriously and incomprehensibly* but one being, is tantamount to saying that the difference between one and three is mysterious and incomprehensible, or rather, that one and three are, in a mysterious and incomprehensible manner, both numerically equal and numerically unequal.

But if the nature of the object to which numbers are applied, has no power to change and to confound the nature of numbers themselves, then, to say that three spiritual beings, finite or infinite, are strictly and truly but one being, or that one such being is, strictly and truly, three, is as contradictory and self evidently false and absurd, as to say that three animals, three plants, or the three angles of a triangle are but one,—or that any one sole individual of these classes of objects, is equal to the whole number of the class considered. Nor could a revelation authenticate such an absurdity, for no testimony could make it rationally credible. No being in the universe can justly require such a belief; for belief can never come into competition with knowledge. Nothing can make such knowledge either more or less certain. Consciousness and intuitive knowledge exclude proof, argument, revelation and doubt.

But if, instead of the term *being*, the term *person* is used, nothing can be truly gained by the substitution. If the term *person* is allowed to have any assignable and appreciable meaning, whatever object it may be applied to, it is subject to the same principles which are above applied to the term *being*. But if it has no assignable or appreciable meaning, then it is sheer nonsense to those who are called upon for their assent to it; and “a tinkling cymbal” or any other senseless sound is only just as good for nothing as itself, if things equal to the same thing are equal to one another.

But, perhaps, some light may be cast on the subject in hand, by considering the possible, and the only possible meanings of the term *person*. These meanings are two, and only two; for the term must denote entity or nonentity—that which is, or that which is not a being. No other use of the term is supposable. If then it is used to signify a being, it has already been disposed of in my remarks on the impossible unity or identity, strict and proper, of three dis-



tinct, individual beings. Oneness and plurality are contradictory terms, the affirmation of either of which is a denial of the other, in respect to whatever object, finite or infinite, the affirmation may be made. But if, on the other hand, the term *person* is used to exclude the idea of a distinct, individual *being*, or, which is the same thing, is used to denote what is not of itself a being ; then it cannot have the nature, attributes, or properties of a being, for the nature and attributes or properties of a being are tantamount to being *itself* ; for nothing else can be supposed to constitute being, or to be predicable of it.

The idea of anything, no matter what name is given to it, having the nature, attributes and properties of a God, is nothing else than the idea of a God, with nothing wanting to complete Deity ; and the idea of three objects distinct and individual, each having the nature, attributes and properties of a God, falls nothing short of the idea of three Gods, each having all that is essential to full and perfect Deity.

Those who hold the doctrine of a tripersonal Godhead seem to be conscious of a dilemma, and all of them feeling obliged to take one of its horns, they cannot agree among themselves which to seize, and, therefore, in their straits, some grasp the one, and some the other. Neither after choosing, will they stick to their choice. To keep still will not do, for saying nothing is unsafe, while speaking out is no safer. Accordingly Professor Pond, when he has told us that the word *person* denotes a "real, substantial, eternal distinction in the Godhead," is not content to leave the matter there, as if fearing legitimate consequences, but tells us elsewhere, that, "Trinitarians have said a thousand times, that they use the word person, not as denoting a *perfectly* distinct understanding, consciousness, and will." And Professor Hodge, of Princeton, somewhat more valiant than him of Bangor, leaves out the word "*perfectly*,"

and affirms outright, that "the church has never taught that there are three consciousnesses, intelligences, and wills in God." On the other hand, Dr. Taylor of New Haven and Dr. Beecher of Cincinnati teach the distinct consciousness, intelligence, and will, of each of the three persons in the Godhead. But at Andover, Professor Stuart assigns no meaning and knows no meaning to the word *person*, nor will he so much as venture to translate the definitions of person given in Latin by various learned and venerable theologians of Europe, from a conscious inability to understand *their* meaning.

I cannot say precisely why Dr. Pond is so careful to interpose the word "*perfectly*" in his caveat in behalf of "Trinitarians," who have "a thousand times" made their disclaimer of three distinct sets of attributes for one God. Certainly that discreet word *perfectly* was not jostled in by accident; and yet, however carefully it was chosen to protect his caveat, it virtually neutralizes and abandons the disclaimer under which it evidently meant to shelter the doctrine of tripersonality. That qualifying word is wholly out of place in relation to its subject,—distinct consciousness, understanding, and will having no grades or shades, but being absolutely perfect, or else not being at all. As, however, the word was selected by the learned Professor as a careful guard, and as there was nothing to guard against but a perfectly distinct consciousness, understanding, and will, it is virtually an admission that there is, after all, among "Trinitarians," *some* distinct, *some* individual, *some* separate, *some* exclusively appropriate consciousness, understanding, and will—a sort of incomplete and imperfect existence of those attributes of an individual in each of the persons. That select and snugly adjusted word "*perfectly*," is a shrewd device, and an ingenious salvo both to the learned Doctor and his many Tripersonal friends; for had he left out the intended qualification, and said outright,

to distinguish genuine from spurious "Trinitarians," that the former "have said a thousand times, that they use the term person, not as denoting a . . . distinct consciousness, understanding, and will," he would have denied to a majority of his brother professors and ministers in New England, now called orthodox, their title to be called "Trinitarians."

It is really difficult to imagine why Dr. Hodge is so shy of the doctrine of "three consciousnesses, intelligences and wills in God." Why should *he* who holds and teaches, as a cardinal truth, the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead actually consulting and covenanting with each other, have any qualms about the doctrine of three sets of attributes in the Godhead—a complete set for each Person? One would suppose that he would hasten to entertain it as his only relief from self-contradiction, unless he also sees as gross a self-contradiction in rejecting it. That less than two understandings and wills can counsel and covenant, is so obviously absurd, that no possible authority can warrant its belief. No evidence of a revelation can be so clear and complete, as the evidence of the falseness of such a proposition would be. The reception of a revelation by a rational mind, in respect to truths or facts above reason but not conflicting with it, depends on testimony; but the proposition in hand is intuitively false. Testimony cannot change the conviction of its falseness, till it shall change the terms of the proposition itself. Every dictate of reason absolutely forbids the belief of it—even that reason by whose dictates we can only approximate to certainty by inductions from testimony. The absurdity is as gross in respect to an infinite, as to a finite nature. To think of doing away with the absurdity by interposing the consideration of infinitude, is of itself another gross absurdity; as much so as it would be to think of doing away the quality of nonsense by alleging its illimitable quantity.

The disclaimer of Dr. Hodge is more than strange—it is marvelous. That so accomplished a scholar and so well trained a thinker should not only misrepresent the fathers, but be willing to take refuge behind so flimsy and transparent a screen, is itself a mystery which the doctrine of “*mystery*” is insufficient to explain. He knows full well, he cannot but know absolutely, and try to impose on himself as he may, still he cannot help knowing that less than two understandings cannot *counsel*, cannot *covenant*—that interchange of thought must be the act of *separate understandings*—that mutual stipulations and mutual conditions can be made and accepted only by, and can be thought of only in respect to, *distinct and independent wills*. Nor can he by any writhings of the mind free it from the certainty that the number of the *consciousnesses* must be equal to the number of the understandings and wills.

Acute and learned men may split metaphysics into invisibility, and twist words into all possible contortions, and do their utmost to vex common sense into a faith which it abhors; but there is a spirit in man that delivers him from the meshes of metaphysical entanglements—an understanding from the Lord, by which he clears his way out of the chaos in which scholastic words and phrases would leave him mazed and confounded.

I have a word to say in respect to a class of Tripersonalists, or rather, a class who fraternize with orthodox Trinitarians, retaining the word *person* but subscribing to it as a term of no meaning—wholly unintelligible. This is a great change in the treatment of a term which for so many centuries has been a watch-word in the church, and whose use has been insisted on, both as a test and a defense of Gospel truth. Perhaps one of the mildest forms of setting forth its importance and necessity, is in the following, by Dr. South, who says, (Vol. II. Sermon 7,) “A plurality of persons

or personal subsistences in the Divine nature, is a great mystery, and so to be acknowledged by all who really are and profess themselves Christians." This comports substantially with the Athanasian Creed: "which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."—I say the change is great from the former veneration of the term, the care which had been given to define its meaning and the use of its meaning "to keep off heretics," to its present exhausted import and cold reception. They do not absolutely reject the term; they only absolve it from all meaning. They patiently acquiesce in its sound as a shibboleth; though if they could have their own way without fretting their neighbors, they would prefer its disuse altogether.

I cannot but regard it as evidence of real "progress," that so large a class, including so many influential and venerable names, have got so far in advance of past generations and of their own former selves as to deny a meaning to that long revered and most practical term. It at least proves their conviction that to assign to it a definite meaning, would involve in absurdity any who should venture to declare its signification. Such a denial I call *progress*, because it abandons the old theological stopping-place, and leaves the mind free to take its course out of the region of contradictions into the domain of homogeneous truth. This denial is, virtually, a condemnation of the past, and as such, it opens the door of hope for the future.

I know it is thought by some, whose opinions in such matters are entitled to much respect, that Dr. Emmons made, or at least sanctioned an innovation on the stereotyped orthodoxy of the church catholic, when he said, "We have as clear an idea of these three Divine Persons as of three human persons. There is no mystery in the personality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though there is a profound mystery in their being one God."\* But, to my

\* Works, vol. IV. p. 125.

view, this is anything but a novelty. It seems to me to be rather a statement, in his own clear way, of an old and familiar view of the subject. This, if I mistake not, is manifest from the definitions of the term *person* as given by some of the most learned and acute of his Transatlantic predecessors at different periods from the time of the Reformation, and who themselves were no more explicit than the Nicene and Athanasian fathers meant to be. Their difficulty was not in defining what person means, but in reconciling their definitions of it with the doctrine of the Divine unity—just the same difficulty which made Emmons pause before his own “profound mystery.” As the term *person*, in reference to man, signifies the individuality of a human being, so Emmons, in common with the older theologians referred to, uses the term, in reference to either the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, to express the individuality of a Divine being—the “profound mystery” of which is, in making three Divine individuals but one Divine individual. There was no obscurity in the term as referring to the three, *severally*. The whole trouble was in harmonizing contradictions in terms—in making unity of plurality—in reducing three “distinct” and “separate” objects of contemplation, each having all Divine attributes, to one sole object having neither more nor less than precisely the same attributes. This is indeed a “profound mystery,” and must remain a matter of wonder till, in spite of creeds, councils, and spiritual faggots, the mind plucks up courage to see and reject contradictions and absurdities.

But, no matter in what difficulty or inconsistency a definition of the term person may involve some other separate statement, as a *definition* it is independent of that statement, and in its own special application is unmysterious and easily intelligible—as much so as if applied to the mythological Jupiter, Mercury, or Minerva, of the Greeks. Emmons used

the term person substantially as does Locke, when he defines person as "a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing at different times and places."\* That Emmons does, in fact, harmonize with the highest orthodoxly Trinitarian authorities of a more reverend date than his alleged innovation, is, I think, manifest from the following definitions of the term person which I find, in Latin, collected in Professor Stuart's learned and valuable *Miscellanies*, (p. 60.) with which many more might be cited not less precise and intelligible.

Melancthon: "An individual substance, intelligent, incommunicable, not sustained in another nature."

Buddaeus: "A single substance, complete, incommunicable, not sustained by another person."

Morus: "A being by itself [ens per se], that understands and acts with intelligence."

Reinhard: "An individual being [individuum] of an incomplete subsistence, acting freely of itself, and partaking [independently] of Divine perfections."

Gerhard: "An individual substance, intelligent, incommunicable, that is not sustained in another, or by another."

Zanchius: "The Divine essence itself distinguished by its own mode of subsisting."

Turretin: "The word person is properly a concrete, not an abstract term, that denotes, besides the form that is personality, the being [subjectum] also, with the form from which it takes its name."

Calvin: "A subsistence in the essence of God, which, though related to others, is nevertheless distinguished by an incommunicable property [an ownership that cannot be another's]."

Perhaps, as I make no pretensions to critical acumen in any language, I should apologize for presuming to translate

\* *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book II. ch. 27.

what the very learned Professor, to whose *Miscellanies* I am indebted, so modestly declines giving to the English reader, on the principle that, “to *translate* implies an understanding of what one professes to represent in another language.”—I may not have done exact justice to every word of the original definitions, though I think the main thoughts are represented with all the precision which the case requires. I confess that I have had much less difficulty in finding accredited words in our own language corresponding to the original Latin of these acute technical fathers, than in matching what is plain in their definitions with what is as plain in their contradictions of them.

And what do those definitions really and plainly teach? Melancthon, the accomplished scholar and theologian, and the friend and coadjutor of Luther may, as respects the Protestants, be considered as representing the period of the Reformation. In his definition, given to *discriminate each person from his divine Coëqual, and, also, from the united Godhead*, we are taught that *each* person is an individual substance, that *each* individual substance has its own intelligence, that *each* is incommunicable, and that neither person has any nature but his own. All this is directly taught or clearly implied in the definition by Melancthon. How many *intelligences* are there in three persons, each of which is an individual substance having its own intelligence?

The rest of those masters, described by Professor Stuart as “leading theologians on the continent of Europe,” taught by their various defining terms, that *each* person is an individual substance—*each* a being by itself [*ens per se*]*—an intelligent individual being—a single, complete, self-sustained substance—a being that acts with understanding—an individual free agent having divine perfections—each the divine essence itself in its own mode of subsisting—a subsistence, in the Divine essence, which is only related to other subsistences in the Divine essence, each subsistence*



being wholly distinct from any other. If, then, *each person* is, by itself, an intelligent free agent, and there are three such persons, each being individually and distinctly an intelligent free agent, and if each has separately all divine perfections, what is such language good for but to unbrain those who use it, if there are not three sets of attributes, one to each person or being? If three persons have severally and individually complete divine attributes, can either of them be other than a God by himself?—and if there are three such persons, each a God by himself, then the number of Gods may be ascertained by counting on one's fingers.

Whatever else the "leading theologians" may have taught elsewhere, or whatever incongruity may attach to the definitions themselves, and whatever care or pains may be taken to condense, confound, or unite three such persons into one being, the attempt is at once abhorrent to language and to common sense.

You have very justly taken notice of Dr. Pond, who figures considerably in the concerted alarm of "*heresy*," now ringing in the ears of the church. He is certainly among the most valiant defenders of what he regards as "the good old way." His views are entitled to consideration as having been collated from those of the worthies who in older times have given law to the church, and thus provided an apology for the saying, "So the church has always understood the subject." Some of his views of the old tripersonal theory seem to be not far, if at all, out of the way. Most real Tripersonalists will recognize in the following statement of the learned Professor at Bangor, the real "tradition of the elders." It runs thus: "The Unitarian believes in one God in *one* Person; while the Trinitarian believes in one God in *three* Persons. And those three must be, not *fictitious*, *dramatic*, *representative* Persons, like the characters in a romance or a play; but *real*, *substantial*, *eternal distinctions* in the one undivided essence of

the Godhead.”\* In this view Dr. P. seems to harmonize with the illustrious Turretin, who more briefly says, that “the term *person* is not abstract but *concrete*.”

Allow me to express to you a few thoughts suggested by the foregoing statement of Dr. P., in addition to your own remarks on the same passage. If the term *person* denotes a “real distinction,” it of course denotes some property, attribute, or quality excluded from that, from which it is really distinct; or, in other words, its attributes must be exclusively its own—they must be the attributes of one person, as contradistinguished from those of any other person.—If this “*real*” distinction is also “*substantial*,” then does it of course include an essence or a nature which is excluded from that from which it is really and substantially distinct; for whatever is *substantially* distinct from anything else, must be so in nature or essence.—And if this real and substantial distinction is also “*eternal*,” then is there some attribute, nature, or essence eternally included in such a distinction, which is eternally excluded from that from which it is so distinguished: for, whatever is really, substantially, and eternally included in any object, whether called being, person, or what not, can be nothing more, less, or else, than some attribute, nature, or essence of that object.—For, not only can nothing be conceived of as pertaining to or inhering in any object whatever, that is not its attribute, nature, or essence, but the supposition to the contrary is absurd, as both confounding and denying the proper, definite, and intelligible use of the terms employed.

But if any should object that there may be a “*relation*” distinct from attribute, nature, or essence, and that the term *person* is used as expressive of such relation, then would it be proper to consider what is included in, or signified by, that relation. And, evidently, it must mean one of two things, viz., either a relation of a part to the whole

\* Pond's Review of Bushnell.

of one general object, of which it is *only* a part, or a relation of one entire object to another distinct from itself, and in no true and proper sense identical with itself: for, by the term, relationship excludes identity, and is not itself predicable of any object in respect to itself.

If, then, the term person is used as expressive of a relation of part to part, of the same general object, then neither of the parts so denoted can be correctly spoken of as having the complete and entire attributes, nature, or essence of that object: for, whatever is only a part, however large the fraction, cannot be, or be properly regarded as, the whole, or as, in any true and intelligible sense, *equal* to the whole. And if this safe and self-evident principle is applied to either person in the Trinity, that person, whether first, second, or third, cannot be a perfect, complete, and entire God, nothing being absent which truly and properly belongs to the real, substantial, and eternal God who is adored as having every perfection.

But if the only alternative is assumed, viz., that the relation signified by *person*, is the relation, not of part to part, but of a whole to some other whole, or in other words, if such relation be that of one complete, entire, perfect, and distinct object—no matter what its name—to another object complete, entire, perfect, and distinct, then, however loosely used, arbitrarily confounded, or firmly stereotyped our terms may be, still the *fact* is clear and demonstrable, that these distinct objects, however named, are distinct BEINGS, each possessing whatever is comprehended in any communicable or intelligible idea of *being*, *essence*, or *substance*. And if the principle just stated be applied to a real, substantial, and eternally distinct *person*, then such term, though never so many individuals, for never so long a time, deny or seek to evade its true and proper force, can mean nothing else than a real, substantial, eternal, and eternally

distinct God—a doctrine which excludes and virtually denies the doctrine of essential *unity in the Godhead*.

The notion that a general consent of the church, for many centuries, to a dogma, is reliable evidence of its truth, is unsubstantial and quite unworthy to be harbored in places where it has been entertained with special honors. Some infirmity of the dogma to be sustained by it, may best account for the pertinacity and gravity with which its claim to confidence is sometimes urged. So important, if not indispensable, has this assumed evidence been considered, that it has been found expedient to prop it up by another assumption as rash as the former is extravagant. This second assumption, auxiliary to the first, is, that the Divine wisdom and goodness are too provident for the honor and welfare of the church to permit its long continuance in any gross error.

Now, to say nothing of the incompetency of human discretion, though ever so kindly disposed, to predetermine the best method of God's providence instead of watching its actual development,—to say nothing of the long night which once confessedly brooded over the church itself, so that hardly a glimpse of its proper glory was discernible through the thick and settled gloom,—leaving out of sight these and other objections to the theory of God's restricted wisdom and goodness in behalf of the church, and returning to the independent assumption that the long harmony of the church, respecting any one of its tenets is sufficient evidence of its truth; what is there, I would ask, in the nature, circumstances, or history of man, to warrant a reliance on such proof?

For myself, I freely confess that I have not as yet discovered anything in human nature, its condition or its history that will allow me to take, on mere trust, any dogma which may have been entertained by the general and uninterrupted consent of the church from the era, or from

beyond the era of the authoritative Council of Nice. If the presumption seems strong that such numbers could hardly have harmonized for so many centuries in their credence of error, that presumption should not so fill the mind as to leave no room for the admission of absolute conflicting proof. Though the presumption be as reasonable as a presumption can be, and though I may greatly respect it while it is a presumption, I am bound to respect much more the decision of my own understanding, on a due consideration of all the evidence of the truth or falseness of any proposition that lies within the scope of my discernment.

But it is a matter of interesting and profitable inquiry, as to what causes give longevity to error among men, from which order of beings the church on earth has not clean escaped. It is not questioned that, for a *brief* period, error, great error, may spread wide in the church. The only difficulty seems to be about its long continuance on the broad scale of its admitted diffusion. As revelation assigns no definite limit as to the number over whom religious error may prevail, any more than to secular error; so it assigns no definite limit as to the duration of either this or that, both of which are sometimes much blended and mutually influential in their diffusion and continuance.

One would suppose that the admission, so freely made, as to the prevalence of error for a time, would make less incredible the idea of its long continuance, since, as a general rule, it is quite as easy to keep out as to root out mischief of any kind. If human reason had liberty to pry into such matters as the wisest and best methods of Divine providence, I do not see why it should not quite as readily come to the conclusion that it would be wiser and better to prevent error from spreading over the church at all, than to eradicate it after allowing it to work mischief for a season, whether longer or shorter. But this is beyond our depth, and instead of intruding our wisdom and goodness where they do not

appear to be wanted, it seems wiser to keep within our more evident province, and learn, from abundant sources of information, that physical disease is not more transmissible from parent to child, than is error, whether secular or religious, from age to age.

The world's experience is full of proof, that in matters of faith, *possession* is a title hard to be disturbed, and that the longer it continues, the stronger it grows. This very plain matter of fact comes of a salutary principle in the nature of man, without which no truth could gain a foothold; for without it, there could be no such thing as character—nothing to create the expectation that the man of to-day, will be the man of to-morrow. The habits of a community, whether a church or a nation, are, like those of an individual, self-perpetuating. How long the distinctive traits of the Roman and the Greek churches have propagated themselves. In like manner did the Lutherans in Germany and the Calvinists in Switzerland preserve what was peculiar to each, as well as what was common to both. Had Congregationalism taken possession of Scotland under the auspices of Knox, and Presbyterianism, of New-England, by consent of the Pilgrims, their ecclesiastical polity had this day been the reverse of what it is. The distinct character of the Jewish faith at this hour, is the legitimate offspring of the faith established at Horeb more than three thousand years ago.

But if the assumption that the long prevalence of a doctrine is a test of its truth, should be ventured upon with great modesty, if at all; a little prudence might be a saving grace to any who is tempted to assume the fact that the church has always maintained the doctrine in question. To claim that they only are "*the church*" who maintain that doctrine, would savor much more of arrogance than of argument; while it would not be over discreet to affirm that

even *they* have maintained their constant faith by the cogency or persuasion of the gospel.

But this unbroken unity, or this fixed ascendancy, so much vaunted of—what is it? and who has seen it? History has no record of the fact, though scribes are not wanting impatient to record it. A single sect denying the doctrine of tripersonality, but embarrassed by extraneous errors and consequent divisions, all but shifted the general current of faith into their channel. The theological battle fought at Nice, left tripersonality master of the field; and who does not know that the first victory is strength for future conquest? A single victory at Actium, which a random arrow might have turned in favor of Antony, placed a long line of Cæsars on the throne, and gave a current to human affairs which has never ceased to flow. Unless the heathen saying, that “the conqueror is Heaven’s favorite” has become a gospel truth, triumph at Nice is but small evidence for the doctrine of the victors.

But when has the Nicene faith kept the undisputed mastery by its own proper force, independently of secular power and carnal weapons? From that day to this, whenever there has been an approximation to free inquiry, that faith has been resisted by great and good men. And even the triumph at Nice was only the successful beginning of a campaign in which victory hovered alternately over the rival standards, either in the Eastern or Western parts of the empire, for nearly two hundred years. For a considerable time, the two parties by turns had possession of the imperial throne, and in no part of the long controversy can it be safely said, that “the church” won the victory by the power of truth in a fair and open field. Ecclesiastical ambition, rivalry, and intrigue, aided by the caprice or the necessities of civil despotism, had too large a share, during all that period of darkness and storm, in the management of spiritual affairs, to authorize a prescriptive claim in behalf

of any doctrine then having the supremacy. Perhaps it is enough here to say, that, while in the Eastern parts of the empire the supremacy of faith was restless till a combination of unspiritual influences settled the controversy in favor of the tripersonalists; their opponents prevailed in the West, till, near the close of the fifth century, the orthodox Clovis reversed the creed of that part of the empire. In Northern Africa, the Anti-Nicene faith was routed by the army of Belisarius, near the middle of the sixth century, and among the Lombards it was maintained till after the middle of the seventh. Thus after having been banished, in one quarter by decrees of Councils, and put to the sword in another by imperial armies, and after having been, by turns, cherished and persecuted by powerful sovereigns as whim or caprice ruled the hour, it was hushed for several centuries of ignorance and despotism.

It is not out of place, in relation to your general subject, to make a few remarks respecting looseness of terms and figurative language. The meaning of words must be more intelligible, more agreed upon, and more fixed, among the learned who in fact have so much control over faith and fellowship. Theological terms play *fast and loose* even in the professor's chair, as systems or changes of systems require. Of this fact the term *person* has had sad experience, considering the assent to its import which has been so strenuously insisted on as a condition of salvation. It has had this meaning, or that, or the other, or none at all, as the exigency of controversy required. It has been used as a hiding-place for logic to dodge under when afraid of being hit, while it has served as a battery when opposition to it was unskillfully managed. Its vagueness has had for many, a bewitching charm. Without telling, or being so irreverent as to suspect what it means, they have been delighted to get so far as to say, with great confidence, "It means



something, we cannot tell what, that lays a foundation for a mysterious something else."

Now, whatever pleasure or comfort this mystification of language may have afforded in times gone by, I think the symptoms are not equivocal, that the next generation, if not its predecessor, will not abide it. The pleasure of such an unsuspected meaning is not so rational as that of certain admirers of Junius, of whom Johnson so sarcastically said, "They who cannot understand his meaning, hope he means rebellion."

Looseness of language and facility of belief, are instructively hit off by the same vigorous author, in his larger Dictionary, under the verb *to worm*, which he defines:—"To extract something, nobody knows what, from under a dog's tongue, to prevent him, nobody knows why, from running mad."—There is much in science, of all sorts, theological by no means excepted, that might be much improved, if their professors would take a hint from the casual, but sagacious lesson of the great English lexicographer.—Said the late Chancellor Kent, very characteristically to a member of the bar, "Do you think these ministers believe the Bible, as you and I believe Blackstone? I don't believe they do."

That language strictly applicable to not less than two beings, may be applied figuratively to but one being, without violence to the understanding, all know, for all so apply it. When one tells another, "I said to myself so and so,"—"When I was young, I made a covenant with myself,"—"I have been communing intimately with myself,"—or—"I had a long struggle with myself, but I finally conquered;"—when one uses such language, strictly implying two voluntary agents, nobody misapprehends it. But if he should affirm that either of those expressive statements is literally and philosophically true, and that there was really a communion of two intelligences, that one of them did really

speak to the other, or that there was, in reality, such a communion of distinct beings, or such a conflict of two voluntary agents, the one of which mastered the other, his so saying, if it did not prove him to be literally "*beside himself*," would prove him either false or insane.

So, also, was it a natural and forcible way, which Paul took to give instruction respecting the exercises of one and the same individual soul, to speak of them as the conduct of two distinct men, each having his own separate consciousness, understanding, and will—two distinct beings of opposite characters, in earnest conflict with each other, the one with a carnal mind, and the other with a spiritual mind, continually warring with each other, and each in turn victorious : and so well did Paul sustain the figure, as to lay on one all the blame of misconduct, except as he was instigated by the Evil Spirit ; and to bestow on the other all the praise of doing well, except as he was prompted by the Holy Spirit.

But there is a limit beyond which it will not do to crowd these bold metaphors, though they often are pushed far over that boundary into the region of the wildest and most grotesque religious fancies. The limit in one language may not always be the limit in another, as a literal translation of one sometimes has a meaning in its new form, which did not belong to it in the original. The translation of words is not always the translation of ideas. Figures of speech that were safe in Judea without note or comment, may be dangerous elsewhere without a skillful and wary interpreter. The genius of a language may be as peculiar in its meaning as in its structure. A Chinese state-paper, so rhapsodical when literally rendered to an English ear, may have much less flightiness at home ; and a sensible Chinese might look somewhat skeptical at an Englishman, who, in regard to shame and surprise, should tell him by a literal version, that he was *mortified* at one time and *thunderstruck* at an-

other. "*The Celestial Empire*," a name that seems so vain and boastful, like that of "*The Sublime Porte*," may mean but little if any more where it belongs than "*Great Britain*" does here; the term *Celestial* denoting, perhaps, only what is comparatively high—elevation, dignity, or *greatness*: and the pompous titles of the Emperor of China may not seem more flatulent in Europe, than the title of "*His Serene Highness*" denoting some petty prince, or than that of "*The High and Mighty Lords, the States General of the United Netherlands*," would seem to a native of the Celestial Empire. A want of regard to, or knowledge of the genius of the Hebrew language has made sad work both with the science of theology and the charity of Christian churches. The luxuriant poetry of Oriental prophets has been trimmed into conformity with the severe and staid philosophy of English prose; and the idioms which were learned in ancient Babylon, or at the feet of Gamaliel, or on the rude shore of the Galilean lake, have been *literalized* into the languages of modern Europe, to be interpreted by the letter, to the killing of the life.

In how many instances in the Bible, is plurality represented as unity and unity as plurality. And with what freedom and boldness of expression are these representations carried out as if literally true. And in how many instances are contradictions of language used to convey emphasis of meaning. Much of the instruction given by Christ himself, though unequalled in moral expression, is antithetical, enigmatical, and, if strictly construed, either mysterious or absurd, where the plainest and most rational truths were intended to be deeply impressed on the minds of plain, unlettered men. Examples in abundance might be cited from the teachings of Christ, illustrative of this statement, but I will refer only to John 6: 48—58. "I am the bread of life. . . . The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Except ye eat

the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. . . . He that eateth of this bread shall live forever." *See the whole passage*—a passage full of "hard sayings," (v. 60.) to hungry men who had come a weary distance by land and lake, for no other object than a miraculous meal of loaves and fishes.

What if figurative language should be applied as literally to the disciples of Christ as it is to Christ himself? Into what delusions would it not carry such as should so apply it? Then would Christians be regarded as literally *dwelling in God, and God in them*, and they as being *filled with all the fullness of God*, so that their unity with God, he as their Father and they as his divinely begotten sons, would be as multipersonal as the individualities so mingled and confounded.

The representations so frequently made in the New Testament, of the *identity* of the church and Christ's body, and the boldness with which such statements are carried into detail, with specific appropriation of the constituent parts of his corporeal being—these numerous and definite statements of identity, illustrate the idiomatic genius of Jewish thought and language. The words of the Savior to his disciples at the paschal supper, "Take, eat; this is my body," when carefully compared with and fortified by the previous words of Christ in John 6: 48—58, teach as plainly as words can teach, if literally taken, the identity of the unorganized, inert, passive, unleavened bread, with the visible, organized, animate, speaking and moving body of Jesus in whose hand was extended, not his other, but his identical self. This, says the Catholic, is a great mystery, but it is really so; and while he adds, "So the church has always understood it," he curses all who will not receive literally the words of Christ and the words of his apostles.

But when Paul teaches, by authority of his miraculous

commission from the Savior, that the church is, also, Christ's body, how plainly, and with what fullness, variety, and frequency of instruction does he endeavor to fix this important truth deep in the mind. Among the many ways in which he teaches the identity of the visible church with the otherwise invisible body of Christ, he says expressly, (1 Cor. 12 : 27.) "Ye are the body of Christ," and not only so, but also, "members in particular." But, as if this was not plain enough for the incredulity of such as would *spiritualize* his instruction, away from its literal and true meaning, he says, (Eph. 5 : 30.) "For we are members of his *body*, of his *flesh*, and of his *bones*:" and, to cut short the matter and leave no room for cavil, the apostle adds, (v. 32,) "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church;"—as much as to say, The mysteriousness of Christ's human and divine natures is so profound and unsearchable, that to determine its possibilities or impossibilities, against a revelation from heaven, is arrogance and presumption which should be humbled at once into absolute and uninquisitive submission.

Such might be the logic of those who would interpret select passages of Scripture by the letter, without regard to their want of harmony with other passages taken as literally, and without regard to their flat contradiction of self-evident truths. Men allow themselves to be misled by the mere fact of a difference in the nature of objects contemplated. In the case of the church, men know that it is not Christ's body. Their senses and their individual consciousness put the matter out of question ; but when they come to consider spiritual and invisible objects, they give a latitude or a straitness to language, as the case may hapen, without the test of the senses or of consciousness to hinder them, and so men are taught, with solemn admonition, to be afraid of reason even in its Heaven-assigned province, and in those

conclusions and intuitions of the mind which are as safe a guide as the senses or as consciousness itself.

It is quite uncertain when the tripersonal controversy which has so long vexed Christendom will come to an end, though it is very certain never to stop, till the charity of Christians shall become broader than are their creeds. So long as Christian fellowship is cramped by subscription to a formula of faith whose terms are either unmeaning, self-contradictory, or defiant to common sense ; so long will men, who value Christ's ordinances and do not undervalue their own reason or the right of private judgment in matters of faith, be impatient of such trammels and be earnest to cast them off. How much self-darkening, how much hypocrisy, how much skepticism, how much strife, how much contempt for the church and for religion itself, have the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, with their countless creedlings, been responsible for, since the way of Christ and his apostles was abandoned for those idols of man's device.

There are three things which would help the church most blessedly, if technical and scholastic lords over God's heritage would allow their subjects a breathing-spell for the experiment,—viz., *reading the Bible with their own eyes, by its own light ;—allowing every one to conform his creed to the Bible, instead of compelling all to adjust the Bible to a creed ;—and restoring, in their spirit, the simple, comprehensive conditions of discipleship and terms of communion which Christ made broad, and his apostles never narrowed.* To fear that the gospel will go to wreck with the anchor which Christ provided for it, and by which it rode out the wild storms of the apostolic age, is want of confidence in the power of truth and the wisdom of its great Teacher. Shall all other truth be most energetic and most beneficent to human interests, when left free ; and that which concerns man's highest welfare be weak, except in bondage? Never

will the gospel be so mighty to save, as when its great power shall work unembarrassed by human restraints.

But I must bring this long letter to a close. Had I suspected the length to which your book would have drawn it, I should hardly have had courage to begin. I know not how I can so well end it as by two remarkable lessons of candor, reflection and foresight, from John Robinson and Jonathan Edwards—that of the latter, a *Resolution* for himself; and that of the former, his parting *Advice* to the Pilgrim Church. —“Resolved, that should I live to years, I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all pretended discoveries, and receive them if rational, how long soever I have been used to another way of thinking.”—When Edwards, in his twentieth year, wrote that resolution, he made an unconscious record of his greatness. Had he lived long enough to keep so difficult a resolution, *perhaps* it would have been kept; and more probably by him than by any other man. Your book must hope for influence with those comparatively young; as there is no harder current to be resisted than that of the mind, when it has run long in any channel.

Said Robinson, with the wisdom of a sage, the affection of a father, and the piety of a saint, to the little church at Leyden, about to embark for the wilds of America :

“*Brethren*,—We are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your faces on earth any more, the God of heaven only knows; but whether the Lord has appointed that or no, I charge you before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

“If God reveal anything to you, by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, *the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word*. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a pe-

riod in religion, and will go at present no farther than the instruments of their reformation. The *Lutherans* cannot be drawn to go beyond what *Luther* saw ; whatever part of his will our God has revealed to *Calvin*, they will rather die than embrace it : and the *Calvinists*, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things.

“ This is a misery much to be lamented ; for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you remember, it is an article of your church covenant, that *you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God*. Remember that, and every other article of your sacred covenant. But I must here withal exhort you to take heed what you receive as truth, examine it, consider it, and compare it with other scriptures of truth, before you receive it ; *for it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-christian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.*”\*

With abundant good will to yourself, and much to spare for your readers, I subscribe myself

Respectfully, Yours,

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\* *Neal's Hist. Purit.* Boston, 1817, p. 146.

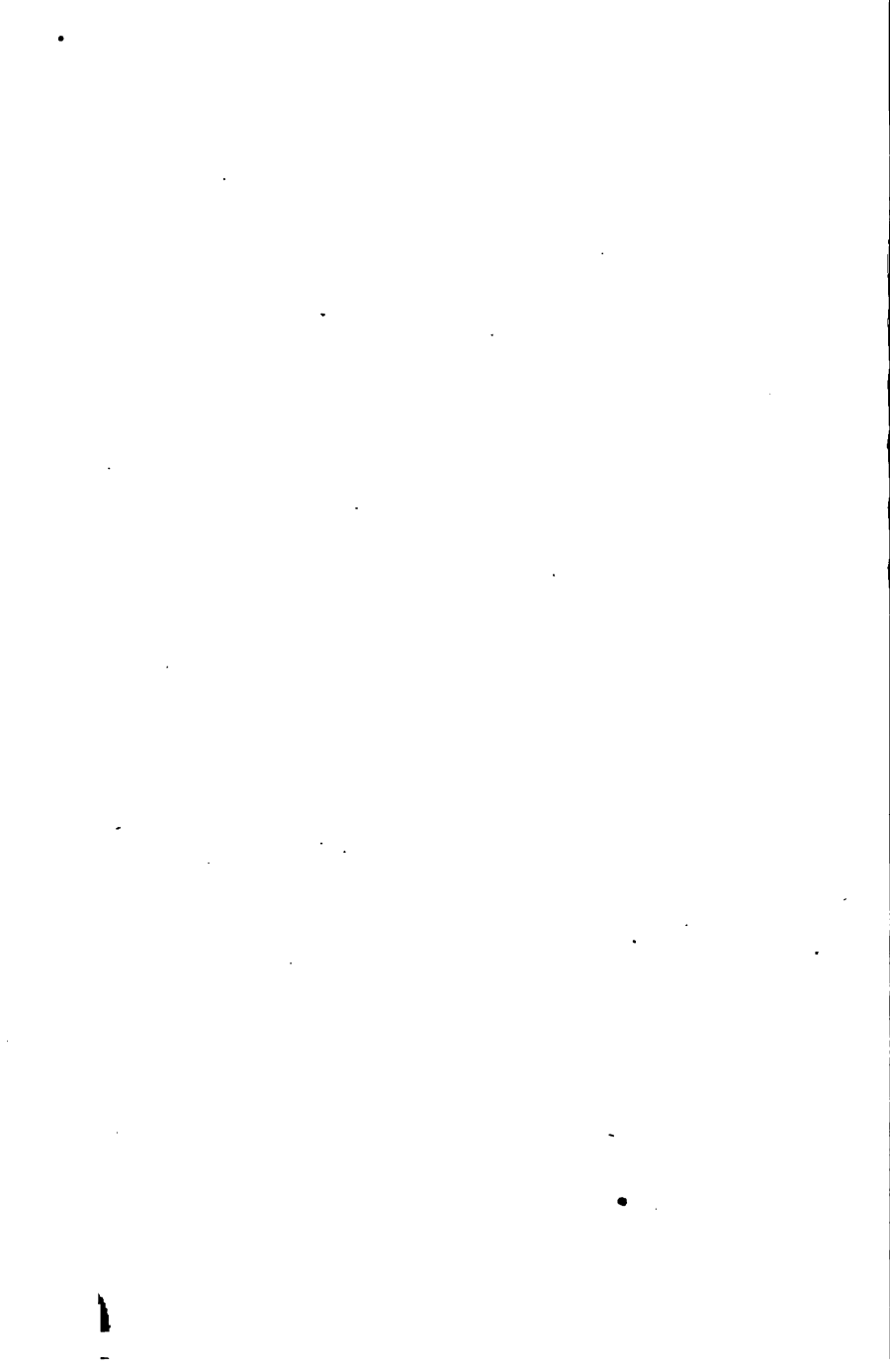




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**A BIBLICAL TRINITY.**

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# A BIBLICAL TRINITY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GOD REVEALED AS THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST.

WE know nothing of God, except as he has revealed himself to us in his works and in his word. This revelation has respect chiefly to the character and condition of man as a rebel against God's government, and to the work of his redemption. God has also given us some intimations respecting the revelation he has made of himself to those intelligent beings who stand connected with man, as seeking his ruin or ministering to his salvation; and in respect to their character, condition and destiny. Otherwise, we know not in what aspects and relations he may have revealed himself to his subjects in other parts of his empire; nor is it necessary that we should know. Of God *unrevealed*—God in the *abstract*, we know nothing.

In revealing himself to man, God has used various

appellative terms to designate himself, expressive of different attributes, or different capacities in which he acts toward men, or different relations which he sustains to them. These terms are proper names of God, used on all occasions to designate the Supreme Being, or having reference to *particular* occasions or classes of his actions, and presenting him to us in different aspects and relations. Thus, he is called Lord, Jehovah, a Judge, a Savior, a Sun, a Shield, a Rock, and the like.

So likewise, the only living and true God has revealed himself to us as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with specific reference to the work of man's redemption. The texts in which all these terms are mentioned *in connection*, are only three. The first is in Matt. 28 : 19—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The second is in 2 Cor. 13 : 14—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." The third is in 1 John 5 : 7—"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." In the first of these passages, these names stand in what some have denominated "the order of subsistence;" though, it would seem, without any good reason for such a metaphysical theory. This passage is a command requiring us to proclaim to the whole world *the truths which the Bible reveals respecting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*, and to introduce into the visible church such as appear cordially to receive *these*

*truths* ; which are the sum and substance of the Gospel. The second passage presents these names in a different order ; putting the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Son, in the first place in the series. It contains an aspiration to God, that all the blessings which he can bestow on man through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, may rest on all those in whose behalf they are invoked. And it seems to teach us, that it is proper to address God in prayer, either as the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. The third passage mentioned above, as an eminent biblical scholar has justly remarked, "if not proved to be spurious, is at least thrown into a state so doubtful, that no considerate inquirer would at present think of appealing to it as authority."\*

But though these three terms are not elsewhere mentioned *in connection*, each one is so used by itself, as plainly to designate the true God. The passages in which they are found, reveal God in a three-fold capacity, and in a three-fold relation to men, with special reference to the work of redemption. This is, pre-eminently, the aspect of the Godhead as revealed and presented to us in the Scriptures.

Here it may be well to remark, that the word *capacity* is used, as the best which occurs, to express the thought intended to be communicated. The word *office* does not express it. *Character* comes nearer to it, and may sometimes be used for the sake of variety.

\* Stuart on the Hebrews, 1st ed., vol. ii. p. 815.

We mean by the word, what is meant when it is said of a man, that he acts in a *private* capacity; or, in a *public* capacity. More strictly, the meaning is that of the phrase—he acted *as* a private individual; or *as* a public officer. So Prof. Stuart says of Christ, that “it is in his *mediatorial* CAPACITY that he acts as judge.”\* In this sense the word is used, when we speak of God as acting in different *capacities*.

Accordingly, it is proposed to consider briefly the view which the Bible gives us of the Godhead, as designated by the terms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We do not purpose to set forth the inventions of metaphysical philosophy for *Divine verity*, as to the internal nature of the Supreme Being, in order to remove apparent difficulties involved in what the Bible reveals to us of God, or to strengthen the evidence of his own testimony in the case,—for it adds nothing, either as elucidation or as evidence,—but to confine ourselves to what is deemed *the Scriptural view of God, as developed by his attributes, and in his relations to us and the creation around us; or,*

#### THE GODHEAD AS REVEALED TO MAN.

##### I. God has revealed himself *as the Father*.

The term is obviously taken from a well-known relation among men, and as applied to God, approximates

\* *Miscellanies*, p. 124.

in its meaning to what is denoted by this term, in that human relation.

1. The term *Father* as applied to God, has reference to the origin of the human race, and designates him as *the Author of their being*. He was the original contriver, who formed the purpose of man's existence and created him in his own image—an intelligent, moral and immortal being, qualified to exercise a subordinate dominion over the inferior creation. Then God gave him that dominion.

In like manner, the same term is applied to him in reference to his beloved Son, the man Christ Jesus. God was his Father. His conception was the result of a supernatural Divine agency; "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—Luke 1 : 35. Then, God sent him forth among men as the Messiah, the Anointed of the Father, the Savior of the world. In this relation to God,—including other particulars yet to be noticed,—he was, according to Hebraistic idiom, "the only begotten of the Father;" that is, *beloved and favored* of God *preëminently*, as no other creature ever was.

He is likewise, in a peculiar sense, the Father of his spiritual children; who have been renewed and sanctified by his word and Spirit. He is the Author of their spiritual life. In these several particulars, differing circumstantially but similar in the most important respect—Divine authorship—God is appropriately denominated the Father.

2. He is so denominated, in reference to *his provi-*



*dential care of those whom he has created.* He sustains them in being, with all their powers and susceptibilities, provides for the supply of their temporal wants, and exercises over them the needful providential care during the whole of their lives. All this providential care and kindness are necessary to their comfort and preservation; and in thus manifesting himself to men, he is their Father; that is, he acts in the capacity and relation of Father.

3. He is the Father of all men, inasmuch as he is their supreme *Moral Governor*. As a human father rightfully exercises moral government over his children, imparts to them his counsels and commands for the regulation of their conduct, disciplines them and administers to them variously, according to his views of their wants, dangers, duties, and deserts; so God, as the Father of the human race and of all intelligent creatures, is their supreme and rightful Moral Governor. Him they are bound to obey, and to him they are accountable for all their conduct. Acting in this capacity, God gave a law to man for the regulation of his conduct, requiring certain things and forbidding others, on pain of his displeasure. If perfectly obedient to the law, men would have sustained to him the relation of loyal subjects, or obedient children, and been made perfectly happy. But man apostatized from God, and thus became a rebel, justly exposed to suffer the full penalty of the violated law. On the occurrence of this event, God was bound by the rectitude of his character as Moral Governor, to maintain the authority of his

violated law, and, so doing, in the regular course of moral administration, to execute the penalty upon transgressors.

4. Foreseeing eternally, that the result of man's probation while under law, would be, his fall and utter ruin; God acted in the capacity and with the compassion of a Father, *in his purpose and provision for the salvation of our race*. Out of his great love to them in their rebellion, he devised a way to effect their reconciliation to him, so as to reclaim them and make them happy without doing injury to his great kingdom. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."—John 3 : 16. "That he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."—Rom. 3 : 26. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Eph. 3 : 11. This plan of mercy which God devised in eternity, he, when the occasion for its execution occurred, introduced into his moral government; which now became, in respect to man, a government of *probation*, with a system of means and agencies appropriate to this peculiar and gracious administration; and he is still carrying it forward to its completion. Accordingly,

II. In the execution of his purpose to redeem man, the true and eternal *God manifested himself in the flesh*. In reference to this manifestation of himself for the purpose in question, the one God is denominated *the Logos—the Revealer of the Godhead*, who commu-

nicated with men in various ways on the subject of their salvation. The person thus manifested in the flesh, is called the Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of man, Jesus Christ, "who is God over all, blessed forever."—Rom. 9 : 5.

It would seem that the manifestation of the Godhead by the Logos in the work of *creation*, was made with special reference to the development of the Divine attributes in the work of man's *redemption*. It is said not only of the Logos, that "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;" but also of Christ the Son of God, that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—Col. 1 : 16, 17. "By him (*ἐν αὐτῷ*) were all things created"—by him as the Logos—as *God who*, when Christ was on earth, *dwelt in him*; which will be more particularly noticed hereafter. "All things were created *by him*."—(*διὰ αὐτοῦ*.) These two expressions *may* both denote the same thing, and refer to him as the efficient cause—as the Logos. But the change of the proposition, (*ἐν* into *διὰ*), in the latter clause of the same verse, seems to render it susceptible of a different meaning: "All things were created *on his account and in reference to his work, as Messiah*." And whether the latter interpretation should not be given in *both* cases, will admit of a serious question; for, the *fact*

that creation was performed with that reference, seems to be clearly revealed. They were also created "for him"—for his glory—for the manifestation of the Divine perfections before the universe, in the work of redemption. "And he is before all things,"—an additional circumstance, having reference to his Divine nature ;—"and *by him* (*ἐν αὐτῷ*) all things consist"—by him as God ; or, on his account as Messiah, all things have their being. These repetitions of thought, as Calvin says of Rom. 5 : 19, are "not tautology, but a necessary explanation of the preceding sentence."

Richard Watson says, in his *Theological Institutes* : (p. 163.) "Who seeks the explication of natural phenomena in theological doctrines ? But there is one view, in which even right views of the facts of nature depend upon proper views of the Godhead. All nature has a theological *reason* and a theological *end*." But more of this hereafter.

In Eph. 3 : 9-11, it is declared, that "God created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent, that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." "God created all things by Jesus Christ ;" (*διὰ*), *on his account*—with reference to *him and his work as Messiah*—an interpretation which will presently be further illustrated. For what *end* was this work performed ? "To the intent," *ἵνα*, *so that—to the end that*. "The sense is, that it was with this design, or that this was the purpose for which all

things were made." (Barnes.) It was to become known *by means of the church*, purchased with the Redeemer's blood; through the mercy and grace of God manifested in the redemption of man; by the means here employed for the actual recovery of his people from the ruins of the fall, and the salvation of the redeemed. Especially was *this* world created as the theater on which these transactions were to take place—where the Logos was to become incarnate—where the Son of God was to suffer and die, and to exhibit the wonders of redeeming love; and where the greatly diversified wisdom of God was to be set forth and made known to the universe. All that he has done, is doing, and is yet to do in this whole matter, is in accordance with his eternal purpose which he formed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And what is more worthy to be done, what more important in itself and to the universe, what more glorious to God, than the work of redemption by Jesus Christ? Why, then, should not God have had this in view as one great *end*, for which, according to his own declaration, he created the universe? Why should it not have been done *on account of Christ* as our Redeemer, and with reference to his work for the salvation of men? What better reason can be given—what more glorious end could the great Creator have proposed, in his great plan?

So likewise, the passage in Heb. 1 : 2, considered *in connection with the general subject* on which the writer is just entering,—the Messiah and his appropriate work,—seems to have its meaning very distinctly

marked. Speaking of *the Son*, the apostle says, "By whom also, he (God) made the worlds." *By whom*, ( $\delta\iota\ \omicron\upsilon$ ) *on whose account as Messiah*—denoting the *reason* of the thing affirmed. This is sometimes the sense of the preposition  $\delta\iota\ \alpha$ , as in the following passages: Rom. 4 : 25—"Who was delivered *for* ( $\delta\iota\ \alpha$ , *on account of*) our offenses, and was raised again *for* ( $\delta\iota\ \alpha$ , *on account of*)—*for the sake of*) our justification." Rom. 5 : 19—"For as *by* ( $\delta\iota\ \alpha$ , *on account of*) one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so *by* ( $\delta\iota\ \alpha$ , *on account of*) the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." In the preceding verse, the same word is twice used in a similar sense. Rom. 8 : 3—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak *through* ( $\delta\iota\ \alpha$ , *on account of*) the flesh." Rom. 14 : 14—"I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean *of itself*;"  $\delta\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , *on its own account—for its own sake*. The same preposition has a similar sense in other passages. And though its meaning has been claimed to be the *occasion*, yet it manifestly denotes the *reason* of the thing spoken of, amounting to *final cause*, or *end*. As other passages of Scripture teach us plainly, that in the work of creation specific reference was had to the work of redemption as one great end for which it was performed; the meaning of the declaration, "by whom also he made the worlds," fairly and naturally appears to be this: that "God created the universe with special (we do not say *exclusive*) reference to the developments to be made of the Godhead in the work of redemption through the

Messiah." This was the *final cause*\*—a most important *end*, or *reason*—for which God made the worlds.

But it has been said that the above sense "put upon *et*" cannot be defended by any examples sufficiently plain, and cogent enough to justify the admission of it." We do not, however, depend *chiefly* on any alleged general meaning of that preposition. Yet on a subject so entirely peculiar, as the one before us,—so unlike anything in common life or in heathen fable,—it is to be expected that language will be used in a sense somewhat peculiar. But as Prof. Stuart says of the same preposition in one of the passages quoted above, (Rom. 5 : 19,) "We cannot here lay any stress on the preposition itself as denoting either for or against the usual idea of imputation, in the verse before us," but "must come to the examination of the *general nature of the whole phrase*, [and we may add, *what is elsewhere revealed on the same subject*,] in order to get the satisfaction which is required ;" so we say of the same preposition in Heb. 1 : 2,—we must examine "the general nature of the whole phrase," in connection with the general nature of the subject which the apostle is discussing, and also, what is elsewhere revealed respecting God, the Messiah, and the works of creation and redemption.

One word here, on the use of prepositions. Their meaning (as also that of other words) in a given case,

\* Since penning the above view of this passage, we notice that a similar interpretation is ascribed to Grotius.

is to be explained, and modified if need be, by the general scope of the subject under discussion, or the nature of the case. Very different prepositions, and even those of opposite meanings, are used in Greek or English, or both, when the meaning of the *phrase* in both cases is the same. The meaning of these little words is often determined almost wholly by the connection in which they stand; and they frequently run into each other, in some of their meanings. In Rom. 3 : 30, it is said; "Seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision (*ἐκ πίστεως*) *by* faith, and the uncircumcision (*διὰ τῆς πίστεως*) *through* faith;" both meaning exactly the same thing. In Rom. 2 : 12, the preposition *ἐν*—*in*, is used for *under*: "As many as have sinned *in* the law"—*ἐν*, *under* the law. The same thought, in Gal. 4 : 4, 5, is twice expressed by *ὑπὸ*—*under*; "made *under* the law, to redeem them that were *under* the law." So we say of some man; "he did thus *under* these circumstances; or, he did thus *in* these circumstances." "He said this *upon* oath; or, he said this *under* oath"—words of *opposite* meaning. Now, if any one should attempt to build up a theory growing out of the different and even opposite meanings of these prepositions, no one would be much the wiser for it. Too much dependence may be placed on the common meaning of a preposition, to the *arbitrary* neglect of the general nature of the subject, or of the phrase, where it is found. Prof. Stuart says\*

\* On the Hebrews. V. ii. p. 313, 1st. ed. *semper*.



of the preposition (*διὰ*) in the verse before us, in reference to the *cause* of creation, "whether principal or instrumental,"—"it is evident that nothing of importance can depend, either in respect to Heb. 1 : 2; or Eph. 3 : 9, on the word *διὰ*." With this statement we feel perfectly satisfied. But if true, is any one competent to affirm that this preposition, in the verse before us, cannot denote the *final cause*, or *end*, for which God made the worlds? Who that duly considers the general scope of this part of the epistle, will venture to take such ground? We do not say there is *no* difficulty connected with the interpretation above given of this passage; but is there no difficulty in giving it such a meaning as presents *two truly* distinct and yet united *Divine Agents* in the work of creation,—the Father as the original, actual, and efficient *Author* of the work, creating the worlds by his Son as the principal, real, and efficient *Agent* in the same? The difficulty with the latter interpretation, is immeasurably greater than with the former.

But as before remarked, our chief dependence is not on the meaning of that preposition. We think the passage should have the interpretation given to it above, particularly on account of the general scope of the writer; whose object evidently is, to treat of the character, office, and work of *the Messiah, the Son of God and Savior of the world*; a fact worthy of particular attention. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us *by*

*his Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." "Spoken by his *Son*," does not designate him as the Supreme God, but as *the Messiah*, in his proper office and work *as such*. His being "*appointed* heir of all things," cannot refer to him in his proper Divinity as the Logos, but as the *Messiah*, or *Son* of God; "by whom also—on whose account—he made the worlds." The apostle goes on to speak of him; (v. 3.) "who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of *his person*"—a form of expression similar to that in Col. 1 : 15; "who, (Christ) in his human nature, is the visible image of the invisible God."—(Bloomfield.) Having thus referred to the Godhead that dwelt in Christ, the apostle speaks of him as "upholding all things by the word of his power;" and then at once speaks of him again as the Messiah; who, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The sacred writer continues to speak of his character and office as Messiah—superior to the angels and greatly exalted above them, because he is the Son of God. (vs. 4–6.) "Let all the angels of God worship him." "It is argued, indeed, that, because Christ is called the Son, he is higher than the angels, and worthy of their worship; that is, of their homage and reverence, as their superior and Lord; just as a king is entitled to the homage and reverence of his subjects: for so the word προσκυνεω [worship] signifies in a multitude of places. But this is far from arguing that he is, for the same reason, God."

The apostle continues, in vs. 8, 9—"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." "Here the Son is addressed by the title *God*; but the context shows that it is an *official* title, which designates him as a king: he has a kingdom, a throne, and a scepter; and in v. 9, he is compared with other kings, who are called his fellows; but God can have no fellows. As the Son, therefore, he is classed with the kings of the earth, and his superiority over them consists in this, that he is anointed with the oil of gladness above them; inasmuch as their thrones are temporary, but his shall be everlasting."\* Prof. Knapp also remarks on this passage, (Ps. 45 : 6, 7.) that "the name *Elohim* is sometimes given to earthly kings. It does not, therefore, necessarily prove that the person to whom it is here given, must be of the Divine nature." So of Ps. 110 : 1, he says, "*My Lord* (Messiah) is here distinguished from *Jehovah*, and is not described as participating in the Divine nature, but only in the Divine government, as far as he was constituted Messiah by God."—(Theol. p. 132.)

Except in the three next verses (10–12), in which the apostle applies to Christ a passage taken from Ps. 102 : 24, 25, addressing him as Lord, or *Jehovah*, and

\* Bib. Rep. Jan. 1840, p. 149.

teaching us, as he has elsewhere done, that HE who was manifested in the flesh as the Son of God, laid the foundation of the Earth—the sacred writer proceeds to speak of him *as the Messiah*, and *of his appropriate work*. This is the general tenor of his remarks ; with a view, indeed, to encourage those to whom he wrote to continue steadfast in the faith. We believe there are but *two* instances in the New Testament, in which it is declared that *God* created all things “by Jesus Christ,” or “by his *Son*.” (Eph. 3 : 9. Heb. 1 : 2.) It is elsewhere said that they were created “by the Logos,” or “by Christ ;” but not in connection with the general name *God*, as the agent. But we think it is *never* said in the Scriptures, that *God* created all things *by* the *Logos*. “All things were made by *him*”—the Logos himself—as the original and efficient cause. The Logos, who is the true God, was the *sole* creator. But in the passage before us, Heb. 1 : 2, the creator is designated by the general term God. In both instances in which this peculiar form of expression occurs,—“*God* created *by* him,”—the context plainly shows that reference is not had to Christ or to the Son of God *as the Logos*,—to him in his *Divine nature*,—but simply as the “mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ;” (1 Tim. 2 : 5.) in other words, to his *Messiahship*. This fact should have all due influence on the interpretation of the two passages, where the expression is found.

For the reasons mentioned above, and with all due deference to the opinions of that learned and able

critic, Bloomfield, we cannot agree with him, that the sense here given of the passage under consideration (Heb. 1 : 2) is "inapposite;" but consider it as strictly *apposite*—exactly appropriate to the subject and the circumstances where it is found. Much less is it "contradictory" to what is said in John 1 : 3; "All things were made by him:" for he of whom this is said is the *Logos*, not the Messiah; and it is not said that *God* made all things *by* the *Logos*. Nor is it "contradictory" to 1 Cor. 8 : 6; "One Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* are all things,"—*on whose account*, or with reference to whose great work as Messiah, all things have their being;—"and we by him"—we are what we are *as Christians*, "by"—*through* his work as Messiah.

Such is the view which we are constrained to take of these several passages, as the one most favored—nay, *required* by the context, and by the particular subject under consideration; and as the only one which seems really consistent with the nature of the whole subject of the Godhead, as revealed in the Scriptures.

Here is a new development of the Godhead, in the great work of redemption. It was not fully made and could not be fully understood, till the incarnation—till Christ appeared, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, and the terms of salvation were proposed and explained by the apostles of our Lord. But these terms were doubtless revealed before, with sufficient plainness to be understood and accepted by man; as was actually done by multitudes, before God was manifest in the flesh.

Then, this new development was more clearly made and better understood; and it is still unfolding to the wonder and admiration of the universe.

We are taught that it was, strictly and appropriately speaking, *the Logos—the revealer of the Godhead in the works of creation and redemption*—who was manifested in the flesh, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. But then, Christ says repeatedly, that the *Father* dwelt in him, and was in him; not occasionally, as the Spirit of God visited the prophets; but abode permanently—"the Father that *dwelleth* in me, he doeth the work." Not the Father in distinction from the Logos, or the Holy Spirit; but simply, that *God* dwelt in him. It is elsewhere said, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." So likewise, while Christ commonly speaks of the Divinity that was in him as the Father,—simply meaning *God*, who sustained to him the *relation* of Father,—by whose power his miracles were wrought; yet he elsewhere distinctly ascribes this work to the Holy Spirit. "If I cast out demons by the *Spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Matt. 12 : 28. And he immediately reminded his hearers, that in speaking against this work, they sinned "against the Holy Ghost." In Luke, the miracle is said to have been wrought "by the finger of God." So likewise, John the Baptist "saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him" (John 1 : 32); thus designating him as the man in whom God dwelt. The apostle John likewise, in applying to Christ a

passage quoted from Isaiah, designates him as the JEHOVAH of the Old Testament; who, in the fullness of time, "was manifest in the flesh." "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory and spake of him." (John 12 : 41. Isa. 6 : 9, 10.)

Here, then, the Divinity that dwelt in Jesus is sometimes spoken of as God, as Jehovah, as the Father, as the Logos, and as the Holy Spirit. It is plain, therefore, that the Divinity who dwelt in Christ was not one distinction in the Godhead exclusive of two other distinctions, but the *whole* Godhead. So the apostle Paul expressly declares it : "In him dwelleth *all the fullness* of the Godhead *bodily*;" (Col. 2 : 9.) that is, *really*—*truly*. This language is as full and explicit as could well be imagined. It plainly teaches us that God—the *whole Godhead*, and not one distinction only—dwelt in the man Christ Jesus.

That he was "the Son of Man"—a true and proper *man*, having a human body and a human soul, is as evident as that Peter, James, or Paul was a real and proper man. The evidence is the same, both in kind and degree. Produce the evidence that John was a man, and this same is evidence—sin only excepted—that Jesus was a man. Reject the evidence of the one, and on the same ground you may reject the evidence of the other. That Jesus was truly a man, is, therefore, not a *theory*—any more than the reader of these pages is a *theory*—but a revealed *fact*; as much so, as that John was a man. And there is no more difficulty in understanding how God could dwell in the

man Christ Jesus, *with* a human soul than without one; nor in him, more than in the Christian; who is a "temple," in which God "dwells and walks." (1 Cor. 3 : 16. 2 Cor. 6 : 16.) There is real mystery in this union and indwelling of the Godhead in the human nature of Christ; but not more than in the union of soul and body in man; or in the indwelling of the Spirit in the Christian. They are facts, the mode of which is not to be explained, because not revealed.

This Son of man was also *the Son of God*. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,"—*formed of human nature*,—"made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" as he was. Gal. 4 : 4, 5. As the result of a supernatural Divine agency, the child Jesus was conceived and born; grew up to manhood; performed, by appointment of the Father, his mission as the Messiah; and "died for our sins according to the Scriptures." He was called *the Son of God*, not on account of his supreme Divinity,—for "his Sonship is not in his Divinity,"—but on account of his miraculous conception, his resurrection from the dead, his office as king Messiah, and his being preëminently beloved and favored of God. More briefly; "he is called the Son of man, on account of his form and nature; and the Son of God, on account of the Divine favor shown him in the high distinction which he obtains."\* Of the same import with Son and only

\* Bib. Rep., Jan., 1840, p. 162.



begotten Son of God, is the phrase, "who is in the bosom of the Father."—John 1 : 18. Observe, the language is not, who *was* in the bosom of the Father," that is, before his incarnation, and who, when he came in the flesh, *left* that bosom, as is sometimes said ; for this language is not applied to the Logos, but to the Messiah. After "God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman*, made under the law," the language became very appropriate ; and it is expressive of the strongest friendship, attachment, intimacy, and endearment ; applicable to Jesus as the Son of God, or the Messiah.

It was *this Son of God* that was given—that was sent—that was born—that agonized in the garden—that died upon the cross—that was raised from the dead—that was exalted to the right hand of God—that was constituted head over all things to the church. "Nothing of all this can be predicated of Divinity, and it consequently shows that, as the Son of God, Jesus is a man.\*

In this man, God was manifested, and the fullness of the Godhead dwelt. This was the *second* manifestation and impersonation of the Godhead, in the work of man's redemption.

But that work was not yet complete. Though God had devised a plan for our salvation, and Christ had died to prepare the way for our reconciliation to him ;

\* Bib. Rep. Jan. 1840, p. 151 ; an able article on the Sonship of Christ, and well worth *studying*. The *proprietor* of that work would render a service to the church by publishing it in a *separate volume*.

something yet remained, in order to accomplish the object. Man, after all the preparation that has been made, is still disinclined from God, and indisposed to return and become reconciled to him. An influence more than human—more than that of the truth alone—is needful, in order to bring him back to God, and secure the end in view.

III. Accordingly, to the regular means of moral administration under a government of law, God has superadded those *peculiar Divine operations*—peculiar to man's state of probation—which are needful to carry out his system of grace and complete the work of man's salvation. This agency is not exerted by him as Moral Governor simply,—as the Administrator of law,—but in a new and peculiar capacity suited to the exigencies of the case. The agency in question is ascribed to the HOLY SPIRIT.

In the affairs of men, he who holds a certain office is commonly designated by some term more or less significant of the duty or service to be performed; as *emperor, governor, legislator, advocate, judge*, and the like. In a similar manner, as already noticed, the supreme God is designated by different and appropriate names, expressive of different attributes and relations, or different classes of his actions. It would seem that he is denominated the *Holy Spirit*, not only on account of his invisible and spiritual nature, but also on account of that peculiar, spiritual, and *gracious* agency, variously

exerted, which he puts forth in carrying on and carrying out the purposes of Christ's redemption.

The Scriptures teach us that the Holy Spirit's agency is not confined to the work of individual salvation ;—which is sometimes spoken of as his *only* as well as his peculiar province ;—but, favoring and advancing in various ways the work of man's redemption, it would seem that *it extends to all things in which Divine agency is employed*, in administering the spiritual and providential government of the Messiah. Unquestionably, as already noticed, *this entire mundane system* is managed in subserviency to the work of redemption ; and if so, then the question is, whether the Holy Spirit performs, as his appropriate work, *all* the Divine agency requisite in carrying out God's plan of mercy, or only *a part* of it ; the rest being performed by God as moral governor simply,—as legal administrator,—or by God in Christ, i. e. the Messiah.

The agency of the Spirit in the sanctification of men, is so important a part of his work, so indispensable, and holds so prominent a place in the Scriptures, that we often hear it spoken of as if it comprehended the *whole* of his agency. But the Bible ascribes to the Holy Spirit an agency *far more extensive* than what appertains to the conversion and subsequent sanctification of men, and therefore favors the idea of his universal agency—wherever Divine agency is exerted in the work of redemption, especially when favoring God's people and kingdom—during the whole period of this world's

probation ; whether the agent is designated by the name God, Jehovah, God the Father, Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God. In one instance, Jude 1, Christians are said to be "sanctified by God the Father." The meaning *may* be, that their sanctification is the result of his plan of mercy by Jesus Christ. Surely it cannot be, that the *Father*, in distinction from the Spirit, is the sanctifier of men ; but it would seem that the term is here used, as it sometimes is elsewhere, as a *proper name*, designating the true God—the Divine agent in the work of sanctification. Not only in the Old Testament, but in the New, the distinctive appellation, Holy Spirit, is not always employed ; it being deemed sufficient that the agency in such case, be ascribed to the supreme God. Where it is important to be known, *the nature of the subject itself* is a sufficient indication, in what capacity the Divine agent speaks, or acts ; that common sense which God has given to man, is allowed to be the interpreter. Thus, Christians are often said to be "children of God," and "born of God," when the Divine agent in their regeneration, is the Holy Spirit. They are elsewhere said to be "born of the Spirit ;" yet they are not on that account called *children of the Spirit*, but "children of God." So likewise, on account of the agency ascribed to "*the Holy Ghost*," in Luke 1 : 35, it was said to Mary the mother of Jesus ; "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*." The nature of the subject commonly shows in what sense the *name* is to be taken, when the agent is called

God, or the Father, or Jehovah, and not the Holy Spirit.

This general view of the Spirit's agency is very much in accordance with the views expressed by Prof. Knapp,\* on the same subject. He says, "Throughout the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, is represented as having an agency, sometimes mediate and sometimes immediate, *in everything which is done* ; and to it everything great and elevated—knowledge, talents, discoveries, arts, great actions, good governments, exemplary virtue and piety, &c., are uniformly ascribed.

"The same mode of expression and representation is adopted in the New Testament, and was common among the first Christians." . . . . . Some of these "were distinguished from the rest by eminent abilities, talents, &c. . . . . Now all these various gifts, abilities, and talents of whatever sort, by which such persons became useful to the church, were ascribed to the Holy Spirit, derived and named from him ; for in these various endowments the agency of this Divine coöperating power was unusually conspicuous. These extraordinary qualifications are commonly called *miraculous gifts*—the gift of teaching, of tongues, of healing, of working miracles, &c.—all of which *promoted the glory and advancement of Christianity*." This is exactly in accordance with the general view which has been taken of the Spirit's agency.

\* Theology, p. 141, 2d Am. ed.

Prof. Knapp does not, in these remarks, refer particularly to any passages in the *Old Testament*; apparently for the reason that they are so numerous and the truths he presents are so apparent on the sacred page, that he did not deem it necessary. However that may be, we shall refer to a few passages.

There are many passages which speak of extraordinary wisdom or skill imparted to men by the Spirit of Jehovah, to qualify them the better for services to be performed for his worship and the benefit of his kingdom, and for the government and defense of his people. In Exodus 31 : 1-11, it is said, "Jehovah spake unto Moses,"—but he who spake to ancient saints and prophets, was the Holy Spirit,—"saying, I have filled him (Bezaleel) with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in all knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship." "And in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee." Among those "that were wise-hearted," and who shared in the wisdom thus given them, were "all the women that did spin with their hands."—(35 : 26.) Substantially the same thing is repeated in ch. 35 : 30-35, and several other places. Here then, extraordinary skill in workmanship, *secular* in itself, but performed for the service of religion, is ascribed to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Passing over other instances of the kind, a similar Divine agency—or rather, one suited to the exigencies of the case—is spoken of in reference to the judges that ruled over Israel. In Jud. 3 : 10, it is said : “ And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him (Othniel the son of Kenaz), and he judged Israel and he went out to war, and Jehovah delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand.” So, in 6 : 34 ; “ The Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet.” Here the Spirit of Jehovah is spoken of as stirring men up to fight in behalf of his church and people, and giving them the victory over their enemies. In like manner, in 2 Chron. 20 : 14–19, when three heathen tribes came out to fight against the king of Judah ; “ the Spirit of God came upon ” certain men, who said to all the people, “ Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude ; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.” The result was, “ they were smitten.”—(v. 22.) God’s people were victorious. In such cases, his interposing agency is gracious toward his people—*favoring* his church, though unfavorable toward her enemies, in their wicked courses. Moreover, God’s agency in his judgments among men, was often a manifestation or vindication of his holiness, justice, and supremacy—all tending to advance his kingdom and promote its welfare.

In that Divine agency which was employed for the benefit of his ancient people, God often acted in that *peculiar* relation which he sustained to them. Jehovah was temporal Head of the Hebrew Commonwealth—

*King* over his people Israel. Moses, Joshua, the judges, and the kings who were afterward anointed or set apart by God, were his *vicegerents*, and acted by his authority and according to his instructions ; unless they revolted from him. In a subordinate sense, they were “ gods ”—acting under him, the supreme God.

Solomon was called the *son* of God,—“ my son,”—on whom God bestowed peculiar favor. When he entered upon his duties as king of Israel, feeling his need of higher qualifications than he possessed, he prayed earnestly that God would bestow upon him a superior measure of wisdom ; such as he needed. His request was granted in answer to prayer.—(1 Kings 3 : 6-13.) It was a special gift ; and the fact that it was bestowed upon him as God’s vicegerent in the kingdom, does not prevent it from being properly regarded as the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, it is said, in unnumbered instances ; “ Jehovah spake to me ; ” “ Jehovah said ; ” “ the word of Jehovah came to me,”—declaring what He, who spake to the prophet, would do in the case. Doubtless we are to understand the speaker and the agent to be the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God. This is not *theory* ; because “ holy men of old spake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*.” So the Spirit of Jehovah is said to come upon men ; and Jehovah inclined the hearts of heathen kings to favor his people in *external* matters,—as the return from the captivity, the removal of obstacles out of their way, the rebuilding of the temple, and the reestablishment of the temple



worship in Jerusalem. Yet these *providential* events were effected, "not by might, nor by power, but by my *Spirit*, saith Jehovah of hosts."—Zech. 4 : 6, 7. Also, Ezra 1 : 1-6 ; 6 : 22 ; 7 : 21-28. Even the necessary skill for rightly conducting the operations of husbandry, are referred to Divine inspiration. "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him."—Isa. 28 : 23-26. That the Divine agency in this matter was not *gracious*, and had no connection with the prosperity of God's people and kingdom, those may affirm who choose to do so. It is well known that he promised his people, if obedient, temporal prosperity ; and such prosperity was then, an important method of showing his favor and of expressing his approbation.

In the Old Testament, as well as in the New, the God who is spoken of as supreme ruler, during the period of this world's probation, is Jehovah the Logos, who was manifest in the flesh. During this whole period, the government of God is administered *with reference* to the work of Christ's mediation. We suppose this is what is properly meant when it is said, that "Christ is the God of the Old Testament." The Messiah reigns. But that *gracious* agency which is employed in carrying out the Divine purposes relative to his kingdom, is to be referred to the Holy Spirit.

To give a summary view of the subject,—though some of the particulars yet remain to be noticed,—the Holy Spirit's agency is recognized, *first*, in the conviction, conversion, and subsequent sanctification of men. *Secondly*, in the miracles wrought by Christ

and his apostles. *Thirdly*, in the miraculous conception and resurrection of Jesus. *Fourthly*, in the inspiration of ancient saints and prophets, and of the apostles and first teachers of Christianity. *Fifthly*, in the exercise of a special providential care over his ancient people—instructing and admonishing them, chastising them for their sins, bringing them out of captivity, punishing the enemies of his church for oppressing and warring against her ; and thus teaching them and others a lesson for the future. *Sixthly*, in imparting extraordinary wisdom to various persons for religious purposes, and extraordinary spiritual gifts to many of the early Christians.—Here it may be proper to add, that in such passages as those which speak of the first Christians as “filled with the Holy Ghost,” and “full of the Holy Ghost,”—(Acts 2 : 4. 4 : 8. 6 : 3, 5, 8. 7 : 55. 9 : 17. 11 : 24. 11 : 9–12, 51.) we believe it will be found, on careful examination, that special reference is generally had to those *extraordinary endowments*—for knowledge, teaching, and acting—which were bestowed upon them, as important and necessary qualifications, in their circumstances, for the successful introduction of Christianity, its firm establishment, and its greatest success in the world. They seem to have this meaning, rather than to refer to those gracious influences which are granted to *all* Christians for their sanctification, support under trials and aid in duty.—*Seventhly*, in aiding and rendering successful the work of evangelizing and converting the world, and in carefully watching over, triumphantly defending, and

gloriously advancing the best interests of the church of God, down to the end of time. And *finally*,—as the Scriptures appear to teach us,—the agency of the Spirit is manifest in the resurrection of the dead; particularly, of the righteous. Of the resurrection of the wicked, little *comparatively* is ever said.

The Holy Spirit raised up *Christ* from the dead. Aside from the evidence of this fact, which may be derived from the general nature of his agency in the work of redemption, there are several passages which seem plainly to teach it. And, as an eminent biblical scholar has somewhere remarked, “one plain, explicit declaration of God is as good as a hundred.” The passages referred to are these: Rom. 1 : 3, 4; 8 : 11. Eph. 1 : 17–20. 1 Tim. 3 : 16. 1 Pet. 3 : 18. 1 Cor. 6 : 14. 2 Cor. 4 : 14. In the *first* of these passages, it is declared, that Christ was constituted the Son of David by the agency of human nature; and powerfully shown or incontestibly proved to be the Son of God, the *Messiah*, by the agency of the Holy Spirit in his resurrection from the dead.\* Tholuck also remarks, that the phrase rendered “Spirit of Holiness,” means in this place the same as “Holy Spirit;” in accordance with a well known Hebraistic idiom. In the *second* passage, it is said, “But if the Spirit of him *that raised up Jesus from the dead* dwell in you, etc.” Some commentators suppose, that by “the Spirit of him,” God the *Father* is meant. But we think it

\* For an able exposition of this passage, see Bib. Rép. for Jan. 1840, by the Rev. Dr. Mayer, late of York, Penn.

needs no proof here, that He who “dwells” in Christians, sanctifying, aiding, and comforting them, is the Holy Spirit. If so, then, in order that the above interpretation may be the true one, “the Spirit” must mean the *Holy Spirit*; and “him,” the *Father* in distinction from the Spirit—an interpretation quite too far-fetched and fanciful to be adopted; for it would make the term, “the Spirit of him,” denote *two* Divine agents—one, dwelling in the Christian; the other, raising up Jesus from the dead. But, by “the Spirit of him,” we are doubtless to understand, the *Spirit of God*—a common term for the Holy Spirit. If this is so,—and it is not easy to see how it can be otherwise,—then the *Holy Spirit* raised Christ from the dead. In 1 Pet. 3 : 18, it is declared that Christ was “put to death by the flesh, (by man,) but quickened (raised to life) *by the Spirit*.” The two nouns (*σαρκί et πνεύματι*) rendered flesh and Spirit, are in the dative case of the agent after the passive participles there used, and should *both* have been rendered *by*, in our translation, instead of one being rendered *in* and the other *by*.\* Macknight remarks on this passage; “As Christ was conceived . . . by the Holy Spirit, (Luke 1 : 35,) so he was raised from the dead by the same Spirit; on which account he is said, 1 Tim. 3 : 16, to have been ‘*justified by the Spirit*.’” On this last text, he remarks: “Jesus having been publicly put to death as a blasphemer for calling himself the Son of God, he was

\* See Bib. Rep. Jan. 1840, pp. 169, 170.

justified—*acquitted from the crime of blasphemy*, which was imputed to him by the chief priests and elders—and demonstrated to be the Son of God, through the operation of the Spirit, *who raised him from the dead.*” To these passages may be added, Eph. 1 : 19, 20 ; in which the same powerful agency which is exerted (by the *Holy Spirit*) in the conversion and sanctification of men, was put forth in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And yet, the agent spoken of as *doing all this*, (v. 17,) is called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” or glorious Father.

Here it may be well to make one or two general remarks. The Divine agent is often designated by the general name God, and often too by a *term* denoting a particular relation ; when, in a given case, the *relation itself* is not particularly referred to ; the term being used simply as a *proper name* ; the circumstances of the case deciding, if need be, in what character the Divine agent acts. Thus, in Jude 1, “sanctified by God the Father,” was not intended to teach us that the *Father*, in distinction from the Spirit, is the sanctifier of men ; but simply to refer the work to the agency of God. At the same time, the sanctifying influence here ascribed to the Father, is the especial work of the Holy Spirit. As there is but one and the same God, though there are diversities of operations, he may be designated by one relative term,—*Father*, Eph. 1 : 17,—and immediately described as acting in another character and relation,—*Sanctifier*, v. 19,—without any change

of name. The reason is, that the true God, who sustained to Christ the relation of Father, is the sanctifier of men; though in this capacity, he is more commonly denominated the Holy Spirit. Hence, too, apparently, the reason why the same act—creation or sanctification—is ascribed to God, sometimes under one name and sometimes under another; *either* name designating the true God.

Long since the preceding paragraph was written, we have noticed a passage (which we here insert) in the writings of the beloved and venerated Evarts, in the near prospect of death; the language of which is similar to that of the apostle Paul, (Eph. 1 : 17–20,) referred to above: “While Mr. Evarts was on his way to Cuba, fully aware of the uncertain continuance of his life, he wrote as follows: ‘Here, in this sea, I consecrate myself to God as my chief good;—to *him* as my heavenly Father, infinitely kind and tender of his children;—to *him*, as my kind and merciful Redeemer, by *whose blood* and merits alone I do hope for salvation;—to *him* as the beneficent Renewer and Sanctifier of the saved.’ ”\*

Here, an eminent Christian in full view of death and ripe for heaven,—with the liveliest emotions toward God as the author of his salvation in the various departments of its work, breaks out from the fullness of his heart, in language exactly in accordance with that of the apostle just referred to, and in Acts 20 : 28,

\* Allen's Biog. and Hist. Dic., Art. *Evarts Jeremiah*.

noticed in the second chapter of this work. He was not in a state of mind to think of metaphysical distinctions of any sort; but he poured out the overflowings of a devout and grateful heart toward *God*, calling "*him*" his Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier—toward "*him* (*God* manifest in the flesh) by *whose blood* he hoped for salvation:" his thoughts and affections supplying (as we have done, upon Acts 20 : 28,) what was needful in the case, without stopping for critical accuracy, and having—without a thought of it—the example of the apostle, in two instances at least, for his mode of expression. But some critics are a little too apt to apply all their studied and philosophical accuracy to the popular language of the Scriptures.

Thus it would seem that the Holy Spirit raised up Christ from the dead, as a part of his appropriate work in carrying out the purposes of redemption. And why is not the resurrection of the dead,—particularly of *believers* in Jesus, the true Messiah—the only and all-sufficient Savior of sinners,—*also* a part of his appropriate work?

Macknight remarks on 1 Pet. 3 : 18; "Christ's resurrection being an example as well as a proof of our resurrection, he was raised by the agency of *the Spirit*, perhaps to show that we shall be raised by the *same* power, exerted agreeably to the will of God and of Christ." The resurrection of the dead is sometimes ascribed to *God*, (Acts 26 : 8. 1 Cor. 6 : 14,) when it does not appear that the *Father* is particularly intended. In like manner, God says; (Ezek. 36 : 26;) "A new

heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ;” but we are not to understand this of the *Father*, rather than of the Spirit. So, “every one that loveth is born of God”—not the *Father*, but the Spirit. In the same manner, when Christ says, (John 5 : 21,) “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them ; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will ;” he may, as he often does, use the term *Father* as a *proper name* of God, who sustained to him the relation of *Father* : but this is not saying, distinctively, whether he raises the dead as the *Father*, as the *Son*, or as the *Holy Spirit*—preparatory to the winding up of the scheme of redemption. In ch. 5 : 28, when he says, “All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ;” it doubtless means, that by himself or by his authority,—which is one and the same thing,—some signal will be given, in close proximity to which the dead will be raised by almighty power ; and their resurrection will have *reference to*, or be *on account of*, the completion of his work as *Messiah*. In 1 Cor. 15 : 21, 22, it is said, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” In other words, “As it is the consequence, or *on account of* the first man’s transgression, that men die ; so also, on account of the obedience of the man Christ Jesus, will there be a resurrection from the dead. For, as by means of Adam and his doings, all die ; even so, by virtue of what Christ has done for the salvation of men, shall all his



followers be raised from the dead, to immortal life." The *all* here, doubtless refers to those *only* who will be saved by his atonement ; the comparison being drawn between those connected with Adam as the father of all men, on the one hand ; and those connected with Christ as the Savior of his redeemed ones, on the other. This is evident, both from the preceding and following verses. In Rom. 8 : 11, it is said ; " He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Doddridge paraphrases it : " He that so powerfully and gloriously raised up Christ from the dead, will also, in due time, quicken your mortal bodies, though corrupted and consumed in the grave, by the agency of that powerful *Spirit* which now dwelleth in you, and acts to quicken you in the divine life." Schleusner also gives the Greek word here (*ζωοποιῶσι*) the same sense ;\* and he classes it with the same word in John 5 : 21 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 22 ; and in 1 Tim. 6 : 13 ; where it evidently means, to raise from the dead. Some commentators give the passage the sense of *spiritual* quickening of our mortal bodies, in this life ; assigning as a reason, that the Holy Spirit is *never* spoken of as raising the dead,—*the very question in debate*,—which cannot, at the outset, be assumed.

But " why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God" the Holy Spirit " should raise the dead ?" He is omnipotent. He possesses *all* Divine

\* Lex. *sub voce*, No. 3. *In vitam revoco, vitam amissam restituo.*

attributes, and has a peculiar and most important part to act in carrying out the plan of redemption. If *whatever* Divine agency is needful in carrying on and completing this glorious work, is to be ascribed to the Spirit, then the resurrection of the dead would seem to be within the appropriate sphere of his agency. It appears to be the true sense of the Scriptures, that "God" the Holy Spirit "hath both raised up the Lord" Jesus, "and will ALSO raise up us by his own power,"—(1 Cor. 6 : 14); and "that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also *by Jesus*,"—on account of what Jesus has done *for* us, and *in* us,—"and shall present us with you."—(2 Cor. 4 : 14.) Moreover, the work of Divine preparation for the winding up of the great scheme of redemption, is not complete, until all men are raised up and assembled before the judgment seat. "God shall raise the dead." There is clearer and more abundant evidence that the agent in the work in question, is the Holy Spirit, than that it is the Father. Still, whether it is God acting as supreme Moral Governor, as God in Christ, or as the Holy Spirit in the performance of his appropriate work in redemption,—that episode in God's moral administration,—is, indeed, a question not of the very *first* importance; seeing that, in each case, it is the *true God* who does it. We may, therefore, refer the resurrection of the dead to any one of these, without being heretical. "God shall raise the dead." *There*, at least, we may safely leave the subject.

This *third* development and impersonation of the

Godhead in the work of the Holy Spirit, is peculiar to the system of grace adopted for the salvation of men. We say impersonation, because God is *personed forth* in the work of the Holy Spirit, as he is in that of the Messiah and of the Father. The shade of thought running through the whole subject of the Spirit's agency, is this ; That IT IS VARIOUSLY EXERTED, *according to the exigencies of the case, IN ALL SUCH WAYS AS ARE NEEDFUL, for effectually aiding and perfecting the glorious work of man's redemption.* All such Divine agency as is *peculiar* to this work, the Scriptures seem to ascribe to the Holy Spirit.

Thus, for the purpose of Christ's mediation, has God revealed himself to man as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ; and in each of these developments, he is the Supreme God.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE COMMON THEORY OF THE TRINITY CONSIDERED.

HAVING taken a brief view of the Godhead as we find it revealed in the Scriptures, we shall now consider the question,—Whether this view of the subject recognizes *three Persons in the very nature of the Godhead itself, independently of all manifestation.*

This Biblical view does not recognize the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as “three Persons,” *in the technical sense of theological philosophy*; each one having his own distinct intellect, susceptibility, consciousness, and will—himself possessing a complete set of “similar or equal attributes” of a distinct and competent Divine agent; for that is nothing less, and nothing else than sheer *Tritheism*; whether admitted or denied; and in whatever manner they are considered as united together in one complex Being. This may be called the *Tritheistic form* of the common theory of the Trinity. Nor does it recognize or deny the *Monotheistic form* of the common theory; namely: three personal, eternal, and unknown distinctions in the nature of the Godhead itself; each of them possessing a complete set of Divine attributes, *common* to them all.

But the view which has been taken of the subject maintains, that, as it is presented in the Bible, each one of these—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—*is a PERSON*, with his own “distinctive peculiarities;”—not a person in the Tritheistic sense, but in the Biblical sense; *i.e.* each one is a different Impersonation of the Godhead from the other two—a *real Person*, and yet not one and the same Person with either of the others; and each one, the infinite and eternal JEHOVAH, revealing himself to man in different aspects and relations, for the work of redemption. God the Father has *his* distinctive peculiarities. These are manifest in the development which he has made of himself *as the Father*. “God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” has *his* distinctive peculiarities. They are developed in what he has done and suffered for the salvation of men. God the Holy Spirit has *his* distinctive peculiarities. They are manifested in that gracious agency which he exerts, wherever and in whatever form it is needed, in carrying out the purposes of Divine grace, through the atonement of Christ. Whatever things are revealed as *peculiar* to any one of these Persons, constitute his “distinctive peculiarities.” But the Divine attributes *themselves* are not distinctive, or peculiar. For, according to the Tritheistic form of the common theory, the attributes of the Father are “*similar or equal*” to those of the Son, and of the Spirit; as well as “distinct” from them. And, according to the Monotheistic form of the common theory, they are “*numerically the same*,” and therefore com-

*mon* to the three Persons. So, in a Biblical Trinity *without any theory*, God is represented as possessed of all possible perfection, manifested by the *same*, and not by *three sets* of Divine attributes. For, the attributes of the Godhead are revealed as *one set* of attributes, infinite in all respects ; not as *three sets* of attributes, “similar or equal.” They are *peculiar* only in their *manifestation*. Omnipotence is omnipotence ; omniscience is omniscience ; infinite benevolence is infinite benevolence,—and so of the other Divine attributes,—whether belonging to the Persons of the Tritheistic theory of the Trinity, or any other ; or to the Persons of the simple Trinity of the Scriptures. To say that this Biblical view represents the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one and the same Person, would be a manifest perversion of the language, and of the truth.

This view of the Trinity is not a *theory*, but a statement of revealed *facts*. God HAS revealed himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *This is incontrovertible FACT*—whatever theories any may choose to superadd, in order to explain, reconcile, or defend the truths revealed. For ourselves, we prefer to hold the facts revealed, and *stop there* ; without the theories.

But it may be said that “the *personality* of the Godhead consists in these *developments*, made in time, and made to intelligent and rational beings,” and therefore cannot be “eternal.”\* Not exactly so. Developments are not persons, or personalities. Were we to

\* Prof. Stuart in Bib. Rep., Vol. v. p. 817.

use the word development, in the definition of personality, we should say, that the *latter* consists in development AND the attributes of the Being who develops himself. Perhaps we might say, too, that the personality in question, consists in the attributes of God developed in certain relations. But we much prefer to say, that we mean by *Person*—not development, nor any mode or form of development, but—*the true God himself considered in relation to what he has done and is doing in the economy of redemption*. To ask whether Person, as thus defined and used, is eternal, is the same as to ask, whether *God* is eternal.

Person, then, is here used, *not* to denote that in God which is not revealed,—whether unknown *distinctions* or anything else,—but that which *is* revealed ; not the Being *alone*, nor the *manifestation* alone, but *both united* : namely ; *God revealed in different capacities and relations*. As God without any revealed attributes, is not the God of the Bible ; so, God without the manifestations which he has made of himself in redemption, is not what we mean by *Person*. True, he did not develop himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *before* he thus developed himself ; but he eternally possessed all those properties or attributes—that *nature*—which prompted him to make those developments, when the occasion for them occurred in carrying out the Divine plan ; as, from the very nature of God, it was certain to occur. It has been remarked, “ that the *names* themselves, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, are names given not so much to characterize

the original distinctions in the Godhead, as those by which the Godhead is disclosed to us in the scheme of redemption. These *appellations* may be said to spring from, and to be peculiarly characteristic of, redemption.”\* This is well said, in the main. But it is elsewhere stated† by the same learned author, as the *middle* and *proper* ground between the two extremes on the subject of the Trinity, that “from eternity there existed that *distinction* in the Godhead, which was developed in the economy of redemption.” Here the whole apparent difference between the views of this admirable disputant and justly venerated instructor, and the view which it is the object of these pages to present, is happily reduced to the compass of a nutshell. Nay, more; to the use of a single word—“*distinction* ;” and that too, when he has elsewhere remarked,‡ that he “inclines to say that *distinction* must be *attribute* ; yet, as its specific nature lies beyond the boundaries of human knowledge, how can we feel very certain respecting any conclusions relative to this point?” Then, *why not leave it where God has left it*, without insisting on a certain alleged, yet unrevealed, unknown “*distinction*” in the very nature of the Godhead itself, when it is believed to be “an attribute,” or “something” fully adequate to the developments which God has made? These developments are fully accounted for, nay, they seem obviously and scripturally to result, from those attributes of the true

\* Bib. Rep., Vol. vi., pp. 108, 104.

† Ibidem, p. 112.

‡ Bib. Rep., Vol. vi. p. 95.



God which are revealed in the Bible ; without supposing any additional "distinction" in the very nature of the Godhead—unrevealed and unknown. Substitute the word *nature* for "distinction," in the sentence quoted above, and the view presented there will be exactly that which it is the aim of these pages to set forth : "From eternity there existed that *nature* of the Godhead which was developed in the economy of redemption." The same writer elsewhere remarks : "There was in the Godhead, antecedent to creation and redemption, *something* which was the foundation of all the developments made in the same." Admirably said ! But who knows that this "something" was some unrevealed "distinction," rather than the attributes of God already revealed ? Distinction, without any knowledge of what it may be, is an unknown quantity ; the value or meaning of which is yet to be ascertained ; and it may as well be called X, as distinction, for aught that appears. It must be *nature*, or "something," revealed or unrevealed, which is adequate to the effect. What use is there in contending that it is, and ought to be called, "distinction in the Godhead itself ?"

But the Divine attributes of wisdom, benevolence, mercy, holiness, justice, power, seem fully adequate to all the developments which God has made of himself to man, without the aid of any "distinctions" in the Godhead, beyond the reach of human knowledge. Indeed, to *these very attributes*, the developments in question seem, in the Scriptures, to be ascribed with sufficient

clearness and fullness. It was his *benevolence* which induced God to "make the worlds," and to create man in his own image and place him under a perfect law. His eternal love to man, led him to devise the plan of salvation. When man rebelled, "God so *loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That same love, in the specific form of grace,—favor to the *ill*-deserving,—prompted him, in order to complete the work he had begun, to "give unto us his Holy Spirit." What other distinction is necessary as a foundation for these developments? What better foundation *can* there be, than love? When the Scriptures ascribe these several manifestations to the revealed attributes of God,—to his *love* especially; what AUTHORITY has any uninspired man, or any number of such men, to ascribe them to unrevealed, unknown, inferential distinctions in the nature of the Godhead, and to denounce that as heresy, which does not say, *Amen*! If our minds are driven to the conclusion that there "must be" some unrevealed "distinction" in the very nature of the Godhead, in order to account for the effects produced; it may be owing to "our modes of conception, definition, and reasoning" on the subject, through speculation and *philosophy* so called, rather than to the inadequateness of the revealed attributes of God, as a foundation for all the developments which he has made.

Still, it has been said, that "as there was a foundation in the Divine nature itself for creatorship and

lordship, or God would never have been actually creator and lord ;” so, there must be “some *corresponding* property of the Godhead,” as “the ground of its manifestations as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” or there is “an effect without an adequate cause.” But *who knows*—who is authorized to affirm, that there must be in the Godhead, some unrevealed distinction “corresponding” to these developments, other than the revealed attributes of God, in order that there may be a cause adequate to effect ? There must indeed be some *adequate* cause ; but it does not seem at all necessary that it should be a “*corresponding* property ;” unless both words mean the same thing. Must it correspond, as the *type* corresponds to the *letter* on the printed page ; or the *die* to the *image* on the coin ? Here is a foot-print in the snow. Whose is it ? One foot is applied, and another, and another, until one is found that fits it—that *corresponds* to it. Is this the meaning ? Let us examine and see.

“God was manifest in the flesh.” But is there anything in God *corresponding* to the flesh ? Why is not *his great LOVE to man*—“for God so loved the world that he *gave his only begotten Son*,”—the “corresponding property”—the “adequate cause” of this “effect,” or manifestation ? He created the material universe. But is there anything in God “corresponding” to *matter* ? Must we, in order to furnish a more full and clear revelation of God than he has seen fit to make, resort to *another* doctrine of “correspon-

dencies between things natural and things spiritual"\*—a doctrine claiming "distinctions" in the internal nature of the Godhead, "corresponding" to the developments he has made of himself to men? Why are not his *wisdom, benevolence, holiness, justice, power*, the "corresponding, adequate cause?" According to the Scriptures, it is *these attributes* which make the foot-prints. You may there see their own impress. There seems to be no more necessity for affirming distinctions in the nature of the Godhead corresponding to these manifestations, than for maintaining the doctrine of "the eternal generation of the Son," or "the eternal procession of the Spirit," in order that it may "correspond," literally or *quasi*-literally, to certain Scripture expressions appertaining to the subject.

From such language as "only Son," "only begotten Son," "only begotten of the Father," and "every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him;" it has been extensively maintained, that the Son, in his proper *Divine nature*, was from eternity truly but mysteriously begotten of the Father. By "eternal generation" they have declared that they mean, "the generation of the *Divine substance* of the Son." In the Nicene Creed it is; "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, from the nature of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not created, having

\* Swedenborg.

the same substance with the Father." In the Athanasian Creed we have it; "that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds." This mode of expression, "the Son is eternally begotten of the Father," though not in the Scriptures, nor justified by them, is used in the Westminster Confession of Faith; in that adopted by the Synod at Boston in New England, 1680; in that agreed upon at Saybrook, in 1708; in that of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; and in other Confessions of Faith.

Now, nothing is plainer, than that it is incumbent on *all* persons, as well as the worthy authors and receivers of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, to examine the Scriptures for themselves, and to judge whether, according to common-sense principles of interpretation, this thing is *so revealed*. We believe it is not said in the Scriptures, that the Son was begotten before the worlds, or begotten of the substance of the Father. The only passages which we have seen referred to as proof\* of this statement, are John 1:14, 18. The language there is, "the only begotten of the Father," and "the only begotten Son." These worthy fathers, nearly all of them, seem, from the very best intentions, to have made quite a mistake in their quotations, or in their interpretation of the terms. They have substituted the word "eternally," for

\* Presbyterian Confession of Faith, Saybrook Platform, etc.

“only”—“*eternally begotten*,” for “*only begotten*.” We should like to see the proof that these two words are synonymous. They have quoted no other or better authority for the language they have used, than the passages referred to. Would they not have done so, had they *possessed* any better authority?

But there does not appear to be any occasion for giving to such expressions of Holy Writ, as “only Son,” and “only begotten Son of God,” a literal, a quasi-literal, or a “corresponding” sense. We do not find them so explained or used in the Scriptures; though they are so, abundantly, in the schools. In accordance with Hebraistic usage, we find these expressions employed in the Scriptures, and in the writings of Josephus, in a very different manner from this. In Gen. 22 : 2, 12, 16, Isaac, the second son of Abraham, is called his *only son*; rendered in the Septuagint, *beloved son*. So in Zech. 12 : 10, the phrase, “as one mourneth for an *only son*,” is rendered, “as one mourneth for a *beloved son*.” The same is true of this word, in Prov. 4 : 3, and Amos 8 : 10. This Septuagint translation was made “by Jews who spoke the Greek language and were familiar with the Hebrew idiom.” Josephus uses these terms in the same sense. He calls Isaac the *only begotten son* of Abraham.—(*Antiq. B. i. ch. 13. 1.*) But he has more clearly expressed the sense in which he understood this term, in speaking of *Izates*, the son of Monobazus, king of Adiabene. “He (Monobazus the king) had indeed Monobazus, his (*Izates*) *elder brother*, by *Helena also*, as he had other sons by

other wives besides. Yet did he openly place *all* his affections on *this his only begotten son Izates*.”—(*Antiq. B. xx. ch. 2. 1.*) “Josephus was cotemporary with the apostle John. He was a Jew, a priest, and a Pharisee. His usage of the term *only begotten son*, settles the question about the *usus loquendi* of the Jews at that time, and shows most fully that its meaning is *the most beloved son*”<sup>\*</sup>—the expression being evidently used in a *tropical* sense. So in Heb. 11 : 17, Abraham is said to have “offered up his only begotten son”—a term expressive of the utmost tenderness and love toward the object of his affection.

It does not appear from anything said in the Scriptures, that a “mysterious” or a “corresponding” sense of the term, *only begotten Son of God*, ever entered into the mind of the sacred writer. In the simplicity of ancient language, various other expressions are used, which cannot, with any good reason, be interpreted literally, as the real meaning of the writer, or the speaker ; though this thing, like almost everything else, has often been done. Christ says ; “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. For my flesh is meat *indeed*, and my blood is drink *indeed*.” It is well known that this has often been interpreted literally. The same is true of what he says of washing the disciples’ feet. It would not comport with that sobriety which ought to be maintained in this discussion, to dwell upon the *literal*

<sup>\*</sup> Bib. Rep., Jan. 1840, p. 158.

meaning of the terms used by David (1 Sam. 25 : 22), in his threat against Nabal's household. It is quite enough to say, that he threatened to destroy all the *male* members of the family before the morning light ; without supposing that he meant to pay particular attention to the literal meaning of all his expressions. Various expressions are used in the Bible, the *true* and *proper* meaning of which, on common-sense principles, would seem to be quite as *obvious*, as the literal or corresponding one. Shall we say, then, that the term, *only begotten of the Father*, must be understood in a *literal* or a *corresponding* sense ? The answer to this question will be very much in accordance with the views which different persons entertain of the doctrine of "eternal generation." But it is not enough to say that this term is "mysterious, and beyond the reach of our minds ;" and that "it is impossible for us to know the mystery of this generation. For, it is reasonable to suppose that God intended to *reveal* something by such terms as, "only Son" and "only begotten of the Father ;" and if so, what he *has* revealed, is not a mystery. We are not *authorized* to throw a cloud of "mystery" over the subject, and to "protest," that no one has a right to approach it for examination, because it is "an awful mystery." For God has not said that there is an unrevealed truth denoted by the above terms ; if he had, we would receive it without hesitation, as a fact declared, but not explained : but we cannot receive it upon mere *human* authority.

What, then, shall we say of such language as this ;



"That the second Person of the Godhead was from eternity Son : Son, not by creation, or adoption, or incarnation, or office ; but *by nature* ; the true, proper, coëqual, coëssential, and coëternal Son of the Father?"\* It is not to be found in the Scriptures ; nor has it any support from them, understood and explained according to common-sense principles of interpretation. Such language and such views had their origin in the *schools*, and have all their authority from them, and not from the Scriptures.

The same writer represents "eternal generation" as denoting and meaning "a mysterious and ineffable"—"a Divine and eternal *relation*" between the first and second Persons of the Trinity. Now, if we understand the writer, as to the meaning of the term, this representation† seems to be a plain departure from the sense of those fathers who formed the various Creeds which have been received by "the church," as presenting the Divine verity in the case. "The generation of the Divine *substance* of the Son"—"begotten from the *nature* of the Father," is something more than simple *relation* ; it is real though mysterious *generation*—generation of his Divine *substance*, from the *nature* of the Father. Had such a view—that of simple *relationship*—been presented in the time of those fathers, it is somewhat doubtful whether it would have been considered *quite* "orthodox," and whether it would not have been publicly denounced as "heresy." Indeed,

\* Dr. Miller's Letters to Prof. Stuart, p. 38.

† Letters to Prof. Stuart, p. 272.

how a man holding and maintaining it, would himself have fared in those days, might have been to him a pretty serious question. But if this worthy and venerable Doctor may depart *thus much* from "the doctrine of the church;" then, surely, others may inquire, whether even *he* has given the exact sense of the Scriptures on the subject. We are not "shut up" to this view of the case, as the only one which the Bible presents. Every one is at liberty to examine for himself what is revealed—to consider the nature of the subject and the Hebraistic use of the terms in question, and after a careful examination, to come to such a result as common-sense principles of interpretation shall require.

If the term *Son of God* is sometimes used to designate the *Divine* nature of our glorious Redeemer, so is the name "*Christ*, who is God over all." But this does not prove that he is, in his *Divine nature*, the Son of God, or the Christ—the Messiah. It is said that "*God* was manifest in the flesh;" but it is not said that the *Son* of God was manifest in the flesh. It is said that "the Son of God was *manifest*"—appeared among men as the Messiah and died on the cross—"that he might destroy the works of the devil." So it is said that "the children of God are manifest."—(1 Jn. 3 : 8, 10.) These terms—the Son of God and Christ—are often used as proper names; and as *such*, may designate his whole Person,—the Son and the Father that dwelt in him,—and even denote his proper Divinity, *before* his incarnation. This is in

perfect accordance with the common and proper use of language. Thus we say—General Washington was born at such a time. But he was not born *General*—not even George, or Washington ; but an infant child, afterward called George Washington, much later appointed Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the United States, and thenceforward known everywhere by the name—General Washington. This name is often carried back beyond the time when he became General, and is properly employed to designate him during the whole of his earthly existence ; and even extending *into the future*.

In the same manner, we use the term *Son of God*, in application to Jesus who is called Christ. The Logos existed in eternity, and was manifested in the flesh in time. “The Son of God,” used *as a proper name*, may be applied to him in every period of his existence. The same is true of other names by which he is called. And we are left to the exercise of our own private judgment and common sense, as to the meaning in each case, considering the connection in which it stands and the whole of what is revealed on the subject. When it is said—“before Abraham was, I am ;” “I came down from heaven ;” he was born ; he died ; he rose from the dead ; he ascended to heaven, and the like ; we have simply to consider what is revealed and known respecting him, in order to ascertain the meaning in a given case. Then we may use the proper name *as such*, in reference to his Divinity or his humanity, his body or his soul, with perfect

propriety. Just as we say of a man whom we all know to have suffered some great calamity ; “ He has suffered a great loss.” All who are acquainted with the fact, know how the language is to be understood. It may be, he has lost his *right arm* ; or he has lost his *reason* ; or he has lost his *only child* ; or he has lost the *whole of his estate*. The word—either his own proper name or its substitute—is used to designate him in very different respects ; and yet we say, very properly, that *he* has suffered a great loss. So, in regard to the various names which the Scriptures apply to Christ,—used in the common and popular way,—there is no need of mistake, *if our PHILOSOPHY does not undertake to meddle with the subject*. In one instance at least, even the name *God* appears to be used in this manner, with a good deal of latitude—supposing the text to be genuine. (Acts 20 : 28.)—“ Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood ;”—“ Feed the church of God,” who was manifest in the flesh—the church of *Christ*, “ which he hath purchased with his own blood.” This is not using the name *God*, with much, if *any*, more latitude than the terms, “ the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory,” and “ God the Father,” are used, in Eph. 1 : 17–20, and Jude 1 ; as already noticed. We know it has been said,—sticking to the letter,—that the meaning is, the church was in fact purchased with *the blood of God*, and that *God* died on the cross ;\* but

\* The Sufferings of Christ. By a Layman.

we cannot help thinking, that common sense and the Scriptures have had quite too little to do with this interpretation. There may have been—there doubtless was—a deep *sympathy* of the *Divine* with the *suffering human* nature of Christ, while God did not die. “The Father that dwelt in him,” sympathized with him in all things.

But we are told that the Sonship of Christ is “a mysterious and ineffable relation;” and we are cautioned against approaching it for examination, but with great awe. We should, indeed, always approach the sacred Scriptures, to examine into their meaning, with very great reverence, and with a deep feeling of our need of Divine aid, in order to a right and full understanding of them. But in regard to “the mystery of this [eternal] generation,” the proper feeling of *awe* in view of the subject, should have had its influence a little sooner—before we had *altered* or *added to* Divine revelation. Then, it would seem, we should understand the term, “only begotten Son of God,” as denoting, *most beloved Son—most favored and honored* of God, as *the Messiah*. No other “corresponding” sense of the term, seems to be required or justified by the Scriptures.

The same is true of “corresponding distinctions” in the nature of the Godhead, other than the revealed attributes of God, as the adequate cause of the developments which he has made. The same principles of interpretation which would justify the one, would justify the other. The same principles which lead us to

reject the doctrine of "eternal generation," would lead us to reject the doctrine of "eternal" or "corresponding distinctions" as a matter *revealed*—whatever there may be, which is *not* revealed.

The same remarks apply to the doctrine of "the eternal procession of the Spirit." It has nothing but a literal or "corresponding" interpretation to support it—an interpretation which the nature of the subject does not require or permit.

This doctrine as taught in the schools, supposes that the Holy Spirit, "as to the *manner* of his being,"\* proceedeth from the Father and the Son. In the Nicene Creed it is as follows; "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the giver of life, who *proceedeth* from the Father." In the Athanasian Creed, "The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding*." In the Articles of the English Church; "The Holy Ghost *proceeding* from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God." Dr. Owen and Dr. Miller adopt the language of the Latin church, calling it "spiration." The *latter* represents† the Holy Spirit "as being, in a Divine and incomprehensible sense, the *Spiration* or *Breath* of the first and second" Persons of the Trinity.

This theory of "the eternal procession of the Spirit," is derived from the following passages of Scripture:

\* Watson's Theol. Inst. p. 221.

† Letters to Prof. Stuart, p. 75.

John 14 : 26. 15 : 26. 16 : 7. " But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you," &c. " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

On this subject, Bishop Pearson remarks :\* " Now this procession of the Spirit, in reference to the Father, is delivered expressly in relation to the Son, and is contained virtually in the Scriptures. First, *it is expressly said*, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father." Again: " Because the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, he is therefore sent by the Father. . . . . Neither the Father nor the Son is ever sent by the Holy Spirit ; because neither of them received the Divine nature from the Spirit ; but both the Father and the Son sendeth the Holy Ghost, because *the Divine nature*, common to both the Father and the Son, *was communicated* by them *both* to the Holy Ghost. As therefore the Scriptures declare expressly, that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father ; so do they also virtually teach, that he proceedeth from the Son."

In like manner, " it is expressly said" by Christ himself, in this same interview with his disciples,—referring to the bread and wine in the sacramental sup-

\* Discourses on the Creed.

per,—“this is my body—this is my blood.” But the *Protestant* church does not construe this language literally. Why not? Why should we not say that in some “mysterious and ineffable sense,” the consecrated bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ; that “it is impossible for us to know the mystery of this” transubstantiation; and that “it is not lawful to search into these heavenly mysteries;” as well as to say these things of eternal generation and eternal procession? No good reason appears for interpreting these declarations of Christ, in his last conversation with his disciples, on principles so radically unlike. In respect to “the procession of the Spirit,” the language of Christ does not seem to refer to “the *manner* of his being”—not to teach us how the Holy Spirit came to be what he is; namely, by having “the Divine nature communicated” to him by the Father and the Son. The doctrine of transubstantiation seems, from the language employed, to come much nearer to plausibility, than the doctrine of eternal procession. But the language of Christ seems plainly and simply to teach us *what the Holy Spirit would do*, under the preaching of the gospel, after that Christ should have finished his work as a *preparation*, from which these gracious Divine influences were to “proceed,” or result. He announced the fact, and gave his disciples a *promise* for their comfort and encouragement.

The plain and obvious meaning of the above passages, quoted from the last discourse of Christ with his disciples just before he suffered,—stripped of antique



philosophy and mysticism,—appears to be this : When the way was actually prepared for the salvation of men, by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, and when the gospel came to be preached to the nations ; then, according to the eternal purpose of God, Christ declared that these special Divine influences should accompany the word preached, and render it effectual to the conversion and sanctification of men. In other words, the gracious operations of the Spirit, in this whole work of sanctification, “ proceed ” from what the Father and the Son have done in devising and executing, thus far, the plan of redemption. From these doings and sufferings, *as a preparation*, “ proceed ” the Spirit’s various and gracious operations in extending and completing the work, as thus begun. These various influences would not have been put forth, nor would men have been converted, sanctified and saved, had not God devised the plan and sent his Son, and had not Christ come and died upon the cross. They therefore “ proceed,” or result, from what the Father and the Son have done in the work of redemption. The Spirit, in the exercise of his gracious agency, *proceedeth* from them.

Such language as *proceedeth, send, come, &c.*, applied to the Holy Spirit, should not be interpreted in a sense “ corresponding ” to the literal meaning of the terms ; as though the Spirit of God was not everywhere present, and had to be sent, as a subordinate agent, from one place to another, according to the exigencies of the case ; but it refers especially to the *results* of Christ’s

work—to the gracious influences of the Spirit, exerted in carrying forward and completing the great work of man's redemption. This language is *human* language; and the representation is very much like that which is employed in speaking of the affairs of men. A man is supposed to *be*, where he acts; and to *go*, in order that he may act in a given place where he was not before; or he is *sent*, to perform a special service, where his presence is needed for that purpose. The same language is applied to God, with reference to the display of his power, justice, grace, and glory in various respects. Accordingly it is said, (Gen. 11 : 5.)—"The Lord *came down* to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded." Had he not seen it before? Is he not everywhere present? (v. 7.)—"Go to, let us *go down*, and there confound their language"—declaring what he would *do*. (Exod. 19 : 20.)—"The Lord *came down* upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount;" he there displayed his glorious power and majesty; communicating with Moses, and through him with the people. He is *known* to be present by his *doings*. Yet he was "not in the earthquake," but in "the still small voice." In like manner, Christ says, "the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will *send* in my name"—meaning that He would then manifest his gracious and powerful influences in enlightening, comforting and encouraging the disciples, and rendering them successful in their work. The meaning of such language as *proceedeth*, *send*, &c.—if we duly consider that, in talking to us, God uses the

language and speaks after the manner of men,—seems not difficult; and if it is not generally and rightly apprehended, this may be owing to customary modes of association, conception, and philosophizing, rather than to any inherent difficulty in the subject itself.

It would seem, from the considerations which have been presented, that the scholastic theories of “eternal generation,” “eternal procession,” and “eternal distinctions in the nature of the Godhead;”—not *the eternal Scripture truths* which they are honestly intended to illustrate and *help sustain*,—originated in the same philosophy, and are maintained by the same principles of interpretation. In respect to the two former theories, the venerable Dr. Miller very consistently remarks,\* that “the several parts of this system must stand or fall together. . . . Those who deny the eternal generation of the Son,” as a doctrine taught in the Scriptures, “will naturally, and unavoidably, deny the eternal procession of the Spirit,” as a doctrine taught in the Scriptures. For this plain reason: that they rest on the same scholastic foundation. To these he might have added the *third* theory above, and that of transubstantiation. The same mode of interpretation and philosophizing which leads to the adoption of one of them, *if carried out*, would lead to the adoption of them all. The theories of “eternal generation,” “eternal procession,” and “eternal distinction,” are *triad sisters*—daughters of the Nicene phi-

\* Letters to Prof. Stuart, ed. 1823, p. 73.

losophy, and descendants of the New Platonic. This sisterhood of theories,—to which that of transubstantiation properly belongs,—cannot with propriety be separated.

Moreover, in regard to the argument for distinctions in the nature of the Godhead, now under consideration, we would say, it is an acknowledged principle that it is *unphilosophical* to assign more causes than are clearly adequate to the effect. If so, it is unphilosophical to assign distinctions, other than the revealed attributes of God, as the only adequate cause of the developments which he has made of himself to men. Not only so, but it is likewise *unscriptural* to assign unrevealed, unknown distinctions as the cause of effects which the Bible ascribes to his revealed attributes. What good reason is there, then, for insisting that there must be a “corresponding distinction” in the very *nature* of the Godhead, in order to account for what he has actually revealed of himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Is the mind of man, *apart from its customary associations and modes of philosophizing*, driven to the necessity of such a supposition, in order to find a satisfactory resting-place in the revelation which God has made of himself to man? Surely, the mind of man cannot be so driven beyond the boundaries of human knowledge, into the awful secret—the internal nature—of the great Eternal himself, unless *by its own philosophizing*! Infinite wisdom, benevolence, holiness, justice, mercy, power,—these are the “corresponding properties,” *adequate* to all the effects in

question. What other "effect" is there, which cannot find an "adequate cause" in the love of God? With the learned and venerable author, whose argument is under consideration, we "incline to say that *distinction* [that mysterious '*something*' in the Godhead] must be an *attribute*"—the great LOVE of God—an attribute not hidden, but revealed. And yet, for centuries, we have been groping around in the dark, with subtil dialectic feelers of Platonic or Nicene origin, to discover some other corresponding, unrevealed distinction in the nature of the Godhead, when, but for our philosophy, the "adequate cause" is plainly to be seen on almost every page of the New Testament.

Were we to make a summary statement of the case, in accordance with what has been advanced in this chapter, it would be this: *There is in God a NATURE, prompting him to all the developments which he has made of himself in creation, providence, and redemption, and to whatever developments have anywhere been made of God, or may yet be made of him in the coming ages of time or eternity.* What need of saying more? What more is revealed?

It is not denied, in this Biblical view of the Trinity, that there is, apart from all Divine manifestation, a real distinction of three, or three hundred Persons in the very nature of the Godhead itself: but it is distinctly maintained, that this is *not necessary* to account for these Divine developments; that it is more a matter of *philosophical speculation* and supposed necessary inference, than of actual revelation, and that it is *extra-*

*scriptural*, and therefore not to be claimed as Divine verity.

In addition to the remarks already made on these positions, we quote the following: "Trinitarians have generally held and freely conceded, that this doctrine of Persons in the Godhead is *not directly taught in the Scriptures*; they have held it as a *theory*, but as the *only* theory that will satisfactorily explain the various and apparently diverse statements of the sacred writers on this subject."\* Prof. Knapp also remarks, that "the theologians of former times generally blended their own speculations and those of others on the subject of the Trinity, with the statement of the doctrine of the Bible"†—a practice which is yet by no means discontinued.

"It cannot be denied that the doctrines of the Christian church were for a long time in the keeping of men, who made no proper use of the Bible in their studies—who speculated, daringly, recklessly about God and things Divine. Cut off in a great measure from the actual world, and having little experience of the real wants of men, and of the fitness of God's revealed truth to meet those wants, they gave themselves up to speculation, as the ultimate end of their intellectual existence. The result was what might have been expected of men thus circumstanced. They encumbered the simple word of God with their own fancies. They cramped it to make it conform to their own scholastic

\* The Congregationalist, (Boston,) June 29, 1849, p. 2. col. 2.

† Theology, p. 181, col. 2.

molds. It was in that age, that many mere human notions were set afloat, which, passing down to after times, were currently received as truths. *These speculations have shaped to a greater or less degree the thoughts and opinions of almost all men.* Considering that this has been the condition of the human mind in past centuries, it is at least fair to suggest to those who hold the older forms of theological doctrine, that they are quite as likely to be somewhat under the dominion of mere human philosophy, as others. It is at least fair that *they should diligently consider their own case*, and not take it for granted that they alone are free, and other men in bondage. . . . . Our only aim is, to lead men to a fair and candid estimate of themselves, and not too hastily to suppose, that all forms of doctrine, just so far as they “differ from their own, are necessarily wrong. *The ‘traditions of the elders’ are no more to be received as authority, now, than in the times of the Pharisees.*”\*

These remarks are just and timely. Yet there are some, who cannot endure that any theological doctrine—that of the Trinity, for example—should not be fitted to “their own scholastic mold.” If they see a form that has not been shaped according to this pattern, they cast their eye backward, along the line of centuries, for some heretical name which may be applied to it, and answer as an argument,—at least for an *argumentum ad invidiam*, or “mad-dog” argument,—in-

\* The Congregationalist, June 22, 1849, p. 2, col. 6.

stead of meeting it with scriptural, common-sense, and *manly* arguments adapted to "the common mind." We have recently counted *thirteen* such names applied to a single case of this kind, without counting them all.

The following has somewhat recently been put forth from a Chair of Theology,\* as the sum and substance of Orthodoxy on this subject:—

"The Unitarian believes in one God in *one* Person; while the Trinitarian believes in one God in *three* Persons. And these three must be, not *fictitious, dramatic, representative* persons, like the characters in a romance or a play; but *real, substantial, eternal distinctions*, in the one undivided essence of the Godhead. So the Church has always understood the subject. . . . So the matter *must* be understood; or there is no real, valid distinction between the Trinitarian and the Unitarian—none which is at all worth contending for—none which does not lie in mere words, and fancies, and figures of speech."

In the first sentence above, the word *Person* is twice used, but obviously in different senses; and yet they are mentioned as if used in the *same* sense: otherwise, the statement has no consistent meaning, and no force. In the first instance, "one Person" means, one infinite *Being*. In the second, the Professor would not be understood to mean *three* infinite Beings. Do Trinitarians profess to believe in three Gods? We are not aware that "Unitarians believe in one God in one *Person*," as the word is used in the common theory of the Trinity. For in that case, they would not "believe in one God" at all; but only in *so much* of God

\* Rev. Enoch Pond, D.D.



as is denoted by *one* Person. In speaking of the *Father*, Dr. Miller says ; “ He is not, he *cannot* be God *without them*,”—the other two Persons,—“ and therefore, he is not *alone* the supreme God.”\* But if the word *Person*, above, is used in different senses, how does it appear, *from this Professor’s statement*, that Unitarians do not believe in the God of the Bible ?

But “ those three must be *real, substantial, eternal distinctions*, in the one undivided *essence* of the Godhead.” Where is this taught ? Not in the Bible. For, “ Trinitarians have generally held and freely conceded, that this doctrine of Persons in the Godhead, is *not directly taught in the Scriptures* ; they have held it as a *theory* ;” and yet they are not at all agreed as to what this “ theory ” is. There are almost as many forms of it, as there are theologians who hold to a theory. This is no modern view of the subject. *Hilary* says of it, in his day ; that “ there were as many creeds as opinions, and as many doctrines as inclinations. *Homoousian* is rejected and explained away. *Every moon*, we make *new creeds* to describe *invisible mysteries*.” And yet most theologians of the present day, in connection with great diversity and inconsistency of representation, varied oftener than “ *every moon*,” do still hold, substantially, to one or the other of the two forms of the common theory, which have been specified. But if it is not taught in the Scriptures, *where is it taught ?* IN THE SCHOOLS. “ The-

\* Letters to Prof. Stuart, p. 273. The *italics* are his own.

ologians" have "blended their own speculations with the statement of the doctrines of the Bible;" and thus, these *speculations* have been wrought into creeds, to be received as Divine verities; and the dissentient, pronounced "a heretic, incapable of salvation." Yet it is said; "So the church has always understood the subject."

"The church!" It has been very much like an army. The will of the latter is that of their several commanders; determined, it may be, in *Council*; nevertheless, the will of the few, if not of a single mind. If a soldier does not obey orders, properly given and understood; he is punished with great severity. So it has been with the members of the church. They must receive and abide by the articles of faith established by *Councils*; or they have been punished by fire and faggot, by banishment, by excommunication and anathema, by church censure, by branding with heretical names,—thus defaming or destroying their *characters*, if not taking their lives,—or in whatever way the taste and fashion of the age apply coercion, in such a case. Generally, the church has not been permitted to think *aloud* on this subject,—except in one or another set of terms,—or individuals to act for themselves. If they have ventured to do so, they have had to suffer the consequences.

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, was banished and recalled repeatedly, according to the party in power. Sometimes one party prevailed, and sometimes another. In one Council, he was condemned by ninety bishops,

as a heretic. In another Council he was declared "innocent," by one hundred bishops; "and Pope Julius confirmed this sentence, in conjunction with more than three hundred bishops assembled at Sardis, from the East and West." "Of the forty-six years of his official life, he spent twenty in banishment, [on account of his religious opinions,] and the greatest part of the remainder in defending the Nicene Creed."\* How much freedom of thought and of belief was allowed "the church" in those days, and for a long line of centuries afterward? Of the whole church, how many suffered martyrdom, on one side or the other, for their religious opinions,—each in its turn declared to be "heresy,"—it would be no easy matter to ascertain. After all; "so the church has always understood the subject!" How could they understand and believe *otherwise*, unless they were prepared to go to the stake?

Look now to Protestant England—perhaps the most favored portion of Christendom. How much freedom of thought and of discussion on the subject of the Trinity, has been *there* enjoyed by the church? There has always been a disposition to think and reason on the subject, among those—and they have been not a few—who were not satisfied with the common theory; and some men of clear and independent minds would sometimes *speak out*; but the strong arm of civil and ecclesiastical law has very often been put forth to sup-

\* Encyclop. Amer.; Art. *Athanasius*.

press it ; and when not actively put forth, its bad influence has been widely felt.

As early as the thirteenth year of the Protestant queen Elizabeth, 1571, a law was enacted, entitled, "*An Act for Ministers of the Church to be of sound Religion* ; by which it is provided, ' That if any ecclesiastical, or which shall have ecclesiastical livings, shall advisedly maintain, or affirm any doctrine directly contrary or repugnant to the Thirty-nine Articles, being convented before the bishop of the diocese, shall persist therein, or not revoke his error, or after such revocation eftsoon [*again, or thereafter*] affirm such untrue doctrine, such maintaining, or affirming, and persisting, or such eftsoon affirming, shall be just cause to deprive such person of his ecclesiastical promotion ; and it shall be lawful to the bishop of the diocese, or the ordinary, to deprive such person so persisting, or lawfully convicted of such eftsoons affirming, and upon such sentence of deprivation pronounced, he shall be indeed deprived.' " \*

So in the ninth year of king William III., 1695, royal " Directions" were issued by the " head of the Church" and " defender of the faith," to the " Archbishops and Bishops, for the preserving of unity in the church, and the purity of the Christian faith, *concerning the Holy Trinity.*" In these " Directions," the persons addressed were required " to see that" the

\* *The Thirty-Nine Articles, &c. Acts of Parliament and Proclamations concerning Ecclesiastical Matters, &c.* ; ed. London, 1724 ; pp. 165-6.

following things were “observed within their several dioceses.”

“1. That no preacher *whatsoever*, in his sermon or lecture, do presume to deliver any other doctrine concerning *the blessed Trinity*, than what is contained in the Holy Scriptures, *and is agreeable to the Three Creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.*” [“The Three Creeds—*Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed*, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles’ Creed.*”]

“2. That in the explication of this doctrine they *carefully avoid all new terms*, and confine themselves to *such ways of expression* as have been commonly used in the Church.”

It is further declared in the same instrument ; “And whereas we also understand, that divers persons, *who are not of the clergy*, have of late *presumed*, not only to talk and to dispute against the Christian faith concerning the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, but also to write and publish books and pamphlets against the same, and industriously spread them through the kingdom, contrary to our known laws established in this realm ; We do therefore strictly charge and command you, together with all other means suitable to your holy profession, to make use of your authority according to law, for the *repressing and restraining* of all such exorbitant practices. And for your assistance we will give charge to our judges, and all other our civil officers, to do their duty herein, in executing the laws against all such persons as shall by these means give

occasion of scandal, discord and disturbance in our church and kingdom.”\*

In order to suppress the spirit of inquiry which was awake on this subject, and the disposition which was manifested to discuss it ; it was thought necessary a few years afterward,—the first year of George I., 1714,—again to issue the above “ Directions,” with some additions, against those who “ *presumed* not only to *talk* and to *dispute*,” “ but also to *write* and *publish* books and pamphlets” concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. The *fourth* article in the instrument of this date, is ; “ That none of the clergy, in their sermons or lectures, presume to intermeddle in any affairs of state or government, or the constitution of the realm, save only on such special *feasts* and *fasts* as are or shall be appointed by public authority ; and then, no further than the occasion of such days shall strictly require. *Provided always*, that nothing in this Direction shall be understood to *discharge* any person *from* preaching in defense of OUR ROYAL SUPREMACY established by law, as often, and in such manner, as the first canon of this Church doth *require*.” Kingcraft and priestcraft went hand in hand, in those days. They countenanced and supported each other ; and all this, to help support God’s truth, and *keep out heresy* ; lest innovation in the Church should lead to innovation in the *regal state* ! But it would seem that this effort to suppress freedom of thought and discussion, was not

\* The book last referred to, pp. 95-6.

altogether successful ; for, in the year 1721, the same "Directions" were again issued, containing also the edict by Queen Elizabeth, already cited.\* The writer of this has no *later account* of these matters.

These are some of the ways and means by which it has come to pass, that "so the church has always understood the subject." The representation seems to be, that this understanding of the doctrine, by "the Church," has resulted from a *general, careful and free examination of the Scriptures* ; otherwise, it is not to the purpose at all, and has no force or meaning as evidence in the case. But on this point, we shall have more to say hereafter. We only say now, in passing, that, so far is this from being true, the most stringent means have generally been employed to *prevent* any other conviction or the adoption of any other views than those which were cast in the same "scholastic molds"—none but those which conformed to the stereotyped terms of established Creeds and Articles of Religion. Sure evidence this, that such theory and forms of language are *orthodox*—according to the true and proper sense of the Scriptures !

"So the church has ALWAYS understood the subject." Those forms of doctrine laid down in ancient Creeds and Articles of Religion, have, indeed, *antiquity* on their side, as the doctrines of the Bible. So has *monarchy*, as the only authorized form of civil government. It has been held, by almost all the na-

\* *Ibidem*, pp. 157-9 ; and 165-7.

tions of Christendom since the commencement of the Christian era, as the only form of civil government established by Divine authority. Are we, therefore, bound to receive it as the only form which has "Divine right" on its side—the only one authorized or sustained by the principles of the Bible? If not; then, why are we bound by the forms or the language in which the doctrine of the Trinity has been presented from remote antiquity, because they have been long received by the church, *in the circumstances specified*? If the argument from antiquity is good in the one case, it is good in the other; and republics should forthwith become converted into monarchies. But as we, in this country, justly claim the right to examine and judge for ourselves in the one case; so have we an equal right to do the same, in the other case.

We have mentioned a prominent and very efficient reason, why the common theory of the Trinity has been so long received, and how it has come to pass that "so the church has always understood the subject." It has not been so, because that theory is plainly taught in the Scriptures; nor, on account of any obscurity or indefiniteness in the Book of revelation: but, when the theory was formed and adopted, this Book was very generally interpreted, according to unsound principles, and its truths seen through the medium of the *philosophy* then prevalent; and having been once adopted and extensively received, and strong parties formed in reference to it, it was no easy task, in later days, especially *in the circumstances which have been specified*,



for individuals openly to reject it ; however clearly they might have seen its repugnance to common sense and the Scriptures.

But there is *another* reason for the continued prevalence of this theory, somewhat different from, and yet allied to the former one, even when there was *sufficient light* to produce an opposite conviction ; if all had been permitted freely to canvass the subject, and to profess their real convictions. We do not refer to the influence of *habit*, in several respects, in retaining long-established forms of doctrine and of language ; powerful as that influence always is : but we refer to the influence resulting from what may be called, the particular *structure of society*, at any given time—of men occupying exalted stations, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical—notwithstanding *the abundance of light*, and frequently *the prevalence of conviction* to the contrary. This might be illustrated by various examples : we will name two of them.

For a long period after the discovery of the *Copernican* or *true* system of astronomy, it was generally believed to be contrary to the obvious teachings of revelation ; because the Bible speaks of the sun as “rising,” “setting,” “going down,” and the like. People generally, and even the better informed, were slow to learn what Galileo and a few others tried to teach them,—what common sense might have taught them,—that the Scriptures were given us, “not to teach *philosophy*, but *religion*.” According to the custom of those times, for maintaining what they be-

lieved the Scriptures to inculcate ; Galileo, then about seventy years of age, was summoned to Rome, to answer to the charge of heresy, before the Inquisition. He was tried by the pope and cardinals, in their way of doing such things, and the system he had maintained, condemned. He was sentenced to abjure his system "on the Gospels." A *part* of his sentence is expressed in the following terms :—

"1. The proposition that the sun is the center [of the system] of the world and immovable from its place, is absurd, philosophically false, and formally *heretical* ; because it is expressly *contrary* to *Holy Scripture*.

"2. The proposition that the earth is not the center of the world, nor immovable, but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is absurd, philosophically false, and theologically considered at least *erroneous* in *faith*."\*

This sentence he solemnly ratified, by signing it with his own hand. (June 22, 1633.) "Rising from his knees after this solemnity, he whispered to a friend, 'It *moves*, for all that.' " This solemn farce did not disprove the Copernican system of astronomy ; and it has long since been universally received as true, "for all that."

So in the other case : That the common *theory* of the Trinity is not the true "center"—the great central truth—of revelation, and that the Bible was not given

\* Penny Cyclopaedia, Art. *Galileo*. Also Edinb. Encyc.

to teach us the "philosophy" of the Trinity—"the *mode* of the Divine existence," but the attributes of God and his relations to us and the creation around us ; there is sufficient light clearly to see and perceive. Denounce a Biblical Trinity *without the common theory*, as "formally heretical ;" bring the influence of men in exalted station to bear against it, because, "so the Church has always understood the subject ;" arraign those who hold it before some ecclesiastical tribunal, and require them to make a solemn recantation, or be cast out as heretics ; still, "it moves"—the doctrine is true, "*for all that.*" No inquisitorial process, however modified its form, can annihilate God's truth, or convert *false philosophy* into *Divine verity*.

It is well known that for a long period, a belief in *witchcraft*—unreasonable and monstrous as that wicked absurdity is—was very generally prevalent among all classes of society, both in Great Britain (to say nothing of continental Europe) and in her American colonies. During that period, a book was published, called "Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft ;" with a long title naming its method, and assigning the reason of its publication—"for the undeceiving of judges, justices, and juries, and for the preservation of poor people, &c. ; with a treatise also upon the nature of spirits and devils, &c."

"It is said that this curious book, so elaborately written upon these uncommon subjects, first published by Reginald Scot, Esq., in 1584, *had, for a while, a very good effect* upon the kingdom, in carrying off those

dregs of superstition to which (as the case of Joanna Southcote has proved) England seems naturally subject, by the paroxysms into which it has so frequently relapsed. James Ady, Esq., in his *Perfect Discovery of Witchcraft*, published in quarto about 1661, observed, that Mr. Scot's book did, for some time, make *great impression upon the magistracy, and also upon the clergy*; but that, since that time, England had shamefully fallen from the truth which it began to receive."

King James the First wrote a Dialogue, called *Demonology*, first printed in Edinburgh in 1597, intended as an answer to *Scot's Discovery*; and instead of confuting him, "not one of Scot's arguments was answered; but the king had continued in the *groundless affirmation* of the tenets refuted by Scot, and unwarranted either by scripture or reason. The king's sentiments, he (Ady) observed, might bring Scot's work into contempt among persons *dazzled by great names*; but with those of *discernment*, and unbiased judges, such an antagonist would only *raise the credit* of the work opposed.\*

It seems, then, that so great an absurdity as *witchcraft*, continued to be received by all classes of persons, long after it had been clearly refuted, and the truth respecting it had begun extensively to prevail. In the account referred to, John Wesley is spoken of as a believer in the doctrine. Even "the upright and conscientious Sir Matthew Hale, at a distance of three

\* For this account of *Scot's Discovery* see *The Entertaining Magazine*; London, 1815, v. 3, pp. 189—192, 263—266, etc., etc.

long reigns, [from the publication of *Scot's Discovery*,] was a firm believer in witchcraft; and almost *another century* was necessary to put the people at large in anything like a proper train to get rid of these shocking and absurd opinions." The influence of wealth, of rank, of power helped to sustain this belief, amid the abundant light which had been shed upon the subject. This doctrine had *centuries of general reception* to prove its soundness and truth; if such a thing be *valid evidence*, on which we can safely and properly depend.

But if such evidence is not a good and safe foundation to rest upon, in such a case as the above, why take it as a basis, or any *part* of a basis, for the common theory of the Trinity? Why claim it as *valid evidence* that the theory is taught *in* or inferable *from* the Book of revelation, as was pertinaciously claimed for witchcraft; and that "it must be true?" If it can be found in the Scriptures, without looking at them through the medium of false philosophy; then let it be made to appear, and let it be universally received as true.

The attentive reader must have perceived that the point of comparison before us is, the *general reception* of the doctrine or theory, for a *long period*; and *not* the doctrines or theories *themselves*, which are brought into juxtaposition for the sake of illustration.

That general principle—found in the structure of society—which operated so powerfully to sustain witchcraft for centuries, when there was light enough to show it—when it *was* clearly *shown*—to be an absurd,

wicked, and abominable imposture; has operated for a much longer period, in connection with other things, to AID in sustaining a theory which had its origin in the Platonic, the New Platonic, or Nicene philosophy, applied to the interpretation of the Scriptures. That general principle still operates, through the influence of wealth, station, office, power, organization—Association, Council, Presbytery, Convention, etc.—all highly useful and very important, when properly employed and duly regulated by the principles of the gospel and the common rights of conscience—all in a measure *indispensable*; yet a principle possessing, in its central and remoter parts, a sort of ubiquity of overpowering influence, tending, if misemployed and abused, to suppress the free investigation of the Scriptures and the profession of any results not fashioned in the same “scholastic molds.” “So the church has always understood the subject.”

“So the matter *must* be understood; or there is no real valid distinction between the Trinitarian and the Unitarian—none which is at all worth contending for—none which does not lie in mere words, and fancies, and figures of speech.” Is it so? Is that *all* which distinguishes a Trinitarian from a Unitarian—*all* which is worth contending for in what is *properly* called “orthodoxy” on this subject, and which results from what is revealed respecting the Father, Son, and Spirit? Are not the supreme Divinity of *each* of these; the real condition of man as a sinner; God’s great love manifested in giving his Son to be the Savior of the

world ; the sinner's justification by faith in a crucified Redeemer ; and many other important truths inseparable from the revelation of the Godhead as made to man—are not *these* “worth contending for?” Are they *nothing*, compared to *that theory*? But the Professor believes in these doctrines ; and perhaps he considers them, not only as taught in those very “distinctions,” but as incapable of being maintained without them. But these Scripture doctrines depend no more, for their maintenance and support, upon that theory of “eternal *distinctions* in the one undivided *essence* of the Godhead ;” than they do upon the philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome. They are *independently* taught in the *Scriptures*, and rest upon *the veracity of God*. “The Bible—the BIBLE is the religion-of Protestants.”

What ! These distinctions the *whole*, in point of importance, of Trinitarian orthodoxy—all “which is worth contending for”—nothing else “which does not lie in mere words, and fancies, and figures of speech !” Prof. Knapp says : “these particular formulas and theories, however much they may be regarded and insisted upon, *have nothing to do with salvation*.”\* Neander also, in his *History of the Christian Religion and Church*, (v. 1, p. 572,)—a work which needs no commendation here,—speaking of “the doctrine of the Trinity,” (by which we understand him to mean the *common theory*—the doctrine *as it has been held*,) remarks,

\* Theology, p. 131, c. 1.

that "this doctrine does not strictly belong to the *fundamental* articles of the Christian faith; as appears sufficiently evident from the fact, that *it is expressly held forth in no particular passage of the New Testament*; for the only one in which this is done, the passage relating to the three that bear record, (1 John 5 : 7,) is undoubtedly spurious." And yet we are told that these distinctions are "the only thing worth contending for !" On the contrary, as God has not seen fit to reveal them, and they originated in the schools, they are *no part* WHATEVER of genuine orthodoxy.

There are three kinds of orthodoxy. *Biblical* orthodoxy; presenting simply, as Divine verity, *what the Bible actually teaches*. This is the only *genuine* orthodoxy; for the *Bible* is the only *true standard* of orthodoxy. Then there is *Scholastic* orthodoxy; including more or less, perhaps all, of what the Bible reveals, and *much more beside*; namely, the scholastic additions—the *costume* in which the schools have presented Scripture truths. But the above representation of "eternal distinctions in the one undivided essence of the Godhead," [what do we know about his *essence*, beside his attributes and relations, as he has revealed them ?] is no part of Biblical truth. It is simply the scholastic *part* of what is called orthodoxy on this subject, *separated* from the Biblical. It is, therefore, nothing less, and nothing else than *Spurious* orthodoxy. (Of this kind of orthodoxy, there is not a little.) So far from being the *only* thing worth contending for, it is not worth contending for *at all*. And if "there is



no real, valid distinction between the Trinitarian and the Unitarian" but this, it is a great pity they should have been contending about it so long. If it be indeed so, they had better *all* take simple Biblical ground, leave off contending altogether, receive as Divine truth what the Bible plainly teaches, and imitate more fully the example of their Divine Master. They may *discuss* the subject, in the spirit of Christ,—allowing all the same right of private judgment and the same rights of conscience,—with very great benefit to themselves and the cause of truth. But harsh disputation, uncharitable contention, and the calling of hard names, are unworthy of Christianity, and of the age.

It has been further put forth from the same Chair of Theology, that "the Trinity . . . . is a *revelation* of God. Must it not be supposed, then, to reveal him *as he is*? [Certainly.] Would the great I AM make to his creatures a *false* representation of himself? [By no means. It is not the Scriptures, but *scholastic philosophy* that has made "a false representation" of God.] Would he make a representation by which ninety-nine hundredths of his professed followers, from the time of the revelation to the present hour, have been deceived?" No: the *Bible* never deceived *one* of them. It deceived them no more than it deceived the rejecters of the Copernican system of astronomy; which was believed to be contrary to the obvious meaning of the Bible. It deceived them no more than it deceived believers in witchcraft; because it is written, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" (Ex. 22:18;)

and, "There shall not be found among you . . . . a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." (Deut. 18 : 10, 11.) How natural for both of these classes of persons to reason : "Would the great I AM make a false representation" of his *works*, any more than "of himself?" Would he "make a false representation" of the state of things which was, or was to be, among his own people, and among other nations of the world ; or of the proper method of *treating* those who professed to be, or were accused of being, "consulters with familiar spirits?" It was an unfair *inference* from what was revealed. The Bible did not deceive the "professed followers" of Christ ; but their *teachers* unwittingly, and their *philosophy* deceived them. The Bible reveals God in his attributes and relations ;—enough for us to know, it would seem from his own revelation, in order that we may understand and do our duty ;—but the philosophy of the schools represents him as existing in *unrevealed*, and therefore *unauthorized* "substantial distinctions"—"or distinct persons"—"in the one undivided *essence* of" his being. Yes, scholastic philosophy, overstepping the boundaries of human knowledge as fixed by revelation, and entering, through its own interpretation of the written word, the secret recesses of God's *essential being*—that *Holiest of Holies*, which no created intelligence is competent to survey or reveal—this *philosophy* presumes to explain the *mode* of his existence. The mode of his existence ! Who knows the real, *hidden import* of such language ? Who

knows the *mode* of his *own* existence? *The mode of his existence*—that awful secret kept within Himself—what human tongue can tell? But the doctors taught this unauthorized, presumptuous, and dark philosophy; and yet the “doctors disagreed” among themselves, as to the meaning of “some learned distinctions which they regarded as true,” quarreled about “their philosophical theories,” denounced one another as “heretics,” excluded one another “from salvation,” persecuted and killed one another. In their zeal for their own peculiar views, they failed to participate, as they might have done, in “the undeserved benefits” resulting from a practical belief of what God has revealed respecting the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and exhibited *anything* but the spirit of the gospel—all this, to maintain what they considered the truth, respecting the *mode* of the Divine existence!

Further: Suppose it to be true, as this Professor thinks it is, that “ninety-nine hundredths” of the professed followers of Christ have believed in the common theory of the Trinity; what does this prove?—that it is taught in the Scriptures? or if not, that the Bible has deceived them? About the same proportion that have received this theory, have also received the theories of “eternal generation” and “eternal procession;” and a very large proportion of these have received, in addition, the theory of “transubstantiation.” Does this Professor receive these doctrines as true,—all, or *any* of them,—because “ninety-nine hundredths,” or some other large majority, of the visible church have “so

understood the subject?" We suppose he does not; or *did* not. If so, then the very argument he urges for eternal distinction, and seems to consider *unanswerable*, he totally disregards, in reference to eternal generation and eternal procession. His argument, if good for *anything*, proves these doctrines to be true; for, if they are not true, much the largest part of the *professed* followers of Christ have been deceived.

But this is not all. The representation seems to be, that this "ninety-nine hundredths" of the visible church have been deceived *by a careful examination of the Scriptures*. How else could this "*revelation of God*" have deceived them? But, from the days of the apostles to the time when the art of printing was discovered, how many of the professed followers of Christ, compared with the whole number, ever read the Scriptures at all? Probably not one in a thousand. How, then, could the *Bible* have deceived them? Not at all, by its direct teaching; but simply through their *religious teachers*, most of whom received this theory from Creeds and Councils—"men, who made no proper use of the Bible in their studies—who speculated, daringly, recklessly about God and things Divine." Shut out in a great measure from the world as it is, "and having little experience of the real wants of men, . . . . they gave themselves up to speculation, as the ultimate end of their intellectual existence." Not only before, but long after the first printing of the word of God, (and *would* that we could say it is not extensively true even now!) both preachers and hearers looked at the

Scriptures, when their speculations did not take the *place* of revealed truth, through the medium of a false philosophy, and they saw not the truth as it is. Nay; they were long forbidden—as we have seen—by the most stringent human laws, to depart from the language or the proper meaning of the terms in which these speculations had for centuries been embodied. And when such laws have not been in force, many other influences, not less powerful, have operated to produce substantially the same results.

The same kind of influence still exists and operates, in various portions of the church. We read in a religious paper, not long since, that the Rev. Dr. ———, of ———, at his inauguration as Professor in a Theological Seminary, “presented himself before the congregation, and read the form of assent to the Confession of Faith of the ——— Church, and affixed his signature to a *solemn pledge*, to teach *nothing contrary thereto*.” Suppose this learned and able Professor, in his future investigations of the Scriptures, should be convinced that *some* of the *philosophy* of the Confession of Faith is unsound, and inconsistent with the Bible and common sense;—what is he to do? He must either conceal his real convictions of the truth, and teach nothing on the subject; or resign, and receive the opprobrium—if nothing more—of his brethren very extensively. Is the pledge, in *such* a form, consistent with freedom of thought and of investigation, or with the rights of conscience? He may not inquire what the *Scriptures* teach, but what the *Confession* of

*Faith*—what “the church” teaches. How does this differ, IN PRINCIPLE, from what Protestants condemn in the *Romish* church, as to the right of every man to examine the Scriptures for himself, and to receive as Divine truth, whatever he, in his own conscience, believes to be there taught? Whatever else *such* a pledge is, or is not, it is A BAR to freedom of thought and investigation, and to the reception and setting forth of that which, it is honestly believed, the Scriptures plainly teach. This is *one* means by which the common *theory* of the Trinity has been so long and so extensively maintained.

Thus it has come to pass, from various causes, that “so the church has always understood the subject.” It seems hardly possible to make a sober statement, in its proper meaning, more adverse to the truth, or an argument more radically unsound, than the statement and the argument we have now been considering.

We have a few things more to say of the *Monotheistic form* of the common theory of the Trinity, compared with a *Biblical* Trinity. If we have a correct understanding of the subject, *that form*, stripped of its metaphysical and apparently unintelligible technicalities, does not differ materially from the simple Trinity of the Scriptures, as set forth on the preceding pages.

Prof. Stuart has well expressed it, when he says he believes, “1. That God is ONE, *numerically one, in essence and attributes*. In other words, the infinitely perfect Spirit, the Creator and Preserver of all things, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has *numerically* the

*same essence, and the same perfections*, so far as they are known to us. To particularize : the Son possesses not simply a *similar* or *equal* essence and perfections, but *numerically the same* as the Father, without division, and without multiplication. 2. The Son (and also the Holy Spirit) does, in some respect *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally and logically, differ from the Father.\* By saying "that God is *one*," he means, "that there is in him only *one intelligent agent*."† When he speaks of "distinctions in the Godhead," (which we have already considered,) "the nature of which is unknown to us, and the actual existence of which is *proved by the authority of the Scriptures only*;"‡ we suppose he means, that they are proved by *inference* from various passages, and from the use of the pronouns, *I, Thou, He*—which will be considered hereafter. Again he says; "Nor is it within the compass of any effort that my mind can make, to conceive how numerical *sameness* of substance and attribute, is compatible with distinct consciousnesses, wills, and affections."‡

What light does all this cast upon the theoretic distinction of three Persons in the nature of the Godhead itself? "There is in him *only one intelligent agent*"—denominated the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—with *one* set of Divine attributes; any one of these Persons "possessing not simply a *similar* or *equal* essence and perfections," to either of the others, "but

\* *Miscellanies*, p. 18.† *Id.*, p. 42.‡ *Id.*, p. 63.

*numerically the same*, without division, and without multiplication." They do, "in *some* respects *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally or logically, differ from" one another; as noticed at the commencement of this chapter. This "one agent," with one set of attributes common to the three Persons, acts as the Father—is the Father. This "one agent," with *numerically the same* (not similar or equal) attributes, acts as the Son—is the Son.\* This "one agent," with *numerically the same* attributes, acts as the Holy Spirit—is the Holy Spirit. It must be so, according to the Monotheistic form of the common theory, or there are two agents *without* the attributes essential to an intelligent, holy agent; whether finite or infinite. The Father is represented as loving the Son, [is reference here had to his *Divine* nature ?] and the Son as loving the Father; the Holy Spirit as loving both, and they him, with *numerically the same* affections, "without division, and without multiplication." But we have been able to find no passages of Scripture in which the Father is represented as loving the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit the Father; but *many* passages, in which the Father is represented as loving his only begotten Son—the Messiah—"the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" and this Son, as loving the Father.

How, then, does this representation of the Monotheistic form of the common theory, differ from that

\* Using the term *Son* as a *proper name*, according to the explanation before given.



which has been presented in the preceding pages, of a *Biblical Trinity*? It seems impossible for the mind to conceive of any difference, *save in words*, in metaphysical terms used to express a mere human theory, invented long ago, and from time to time, modified till it has come into a shape differing little, if at all, except in these metaphysical and unintelligible terms, from the simple Trinity of the Scriptures. "One intelligent agent," in the exercise of "*numerically the same* perfections," acting in different capacities and relations, as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—"God, only in his relation to us and the creation around us, God as developed by his attributes"\*—seems to be the one only living and true God, who is revealed to us in the Scriptures; without including distinctions in the very nature of the Godhead itself. These distinctions, if they really exist, are unrevealed except by *inference*, far-fetched and fanciful; unknown as to their nature—unknown as to *what they really are*; beyond the reach of human knowledge; and unauthorized by the Scriptures.

Then let us *drop* these unknown, unintelligible, merely inferential, and scholastic distinctions; and retain simply what the Bible plainly reveals to us of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and we have left, *the simple Trinity of the Scriptures*—without theory, without metaphysics, and adapted to "the common mind," to which God has made a revelation of

\* Stuart on Heb. v. 2, p. 315.

himself with reference to the work of man's redemption. Here we leave the *Monotheistic form* of the common theory of the Trinity with the common sense of the Christian community.

We now proceed to consider, more particularly, the *Tritheistic form* of the common theory of the Trinity. How extensively this is held by theologians of the present day it would be somewhat difficult to ascertain. One author\* remarks: "Trinitarians have said, a thousand times, that they use the word Person not . . . . as denoting a perfectly distinct consciousness, understanding, and will." If not "*perfectly distinct*," how distinct is it? What is it *short* of perfection? But others have said, a *great many* times,—for we have not counted them,—that they *do* hold it. That this form of the common theory is held by a large portion of the Christian church seems to admit of no question. Those especially who receive what is technically called "the Covenant of Redemption"—a theory yet to be considered—would seem to hold it as a matter of course. For, such a transaction as that is represented to have been, between three Persons, having *one* set of Divine attributes *in common*, seems to be something more than a mystery—a plain absurdity.

Dr. Doddridge in his lectures, giving an account of the manner in which the Trinity has been held by distinguished theologians, says: "Mr. Howe [Rev. John

\* Dr. Pond.

Howe] seems to suppose, that there are *three distinct, eternal spirits*, or distinct intelligent hypostases, each having *his own distinct, singular, intelligent nature*, united in such an inexplicable manner, as that upon account of their perfect harmony, consent, and affection, to which he adds their mutual self-consciousness, they may be called *the one God*, as properly as the different corporeal, sensitive, and intellectual natures united, may be called *one man*.

“Dr. Waterland, Dr. Ab. Taylor, with the rest of the Athanasians, assert three proper distinct Persons, *entirely equal to and independent upon* each other, yet making up one and the same being.

“Bishop Pearson, with whom Bishop Bull also agrees, is of opinion, that though God the Father is the *fountain* of the Deity, the *whole* Divine nature is *communicated* from the Father to the Son, and from both to the Spirit; yet so as that the Father and Son are not separate or separable from the Divinity, but do still exist in it, and are most intimately united to it. This was likewise Dr. Owen’s scheme.”\*

Those who can receive such “inexplicable,” unrevealed, and contradictory statements for *Divine verities*, and take shelter under the shadow of a mystery of their own creating, “charging it all to the weakness of our understanding, and not to the absurdity of the doctrine” or statement “itself,” are prepared to receive almost anything for *revealed* truth.

\* Lectures, 2d ed. London, 1776, pp. 402, 3.

Dr. Barrow, in his *Defense of the Trinity*, remarks—and the statement has been sanctioned by *Richard Watson*, as being “well expressed, by as great a master of reason and science as he was of theology”—that “there is one Divine nature or essence, common unto three Persons *incomprehensibly united*, and *ineffably distinguished*; [who knows that?] united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every Divine perfection, each different from the other in *order* and *manner of subsistence*; [where is that revealed?] that there is a mutual existence of one in all, and all in one; a communication [an *eternal* communication?] without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant; an eternal generation, and an eternal procession without precedence or succession, without proper causality or dependence; a Father imparting his own, and a Son receiving his Father’s life; and a Spirit issuing from both, without any division or multiplication of essence.” How far does this come short of an infinite absurdity, and “an eternal contradiction?” The same writer adds: “These are *notions* which may well *puzzle* our reason in conceiving *how* they agree; [exactly so;] but ought not to stagger our faith in asserting that they are true.” What, then, cannot be made out from the Bible, and received as Divine verity? The venerable Dr. Woods very justly remarks, (Works, v. i. p. 442,) that “the test, by which we must determine the truth or falsehood of any statement of this doctrine, or any theory respecting it, is *the word of*

God.” As the theory or statement above “gives an unnatural and forced construction to those texts which relate to it, we certainly cannot receive it.”

In “a sermon on the doctrine of the Trinity, preached by one of the most eminent and venerable of living theologians,” of our own country, it was stated,—as reported in *The Independent* for Aug. 2, 1849,—that “the personality of the Son as distinct from that of the Father on the one hand, and from that of the Holy Spirit on the other, is just the same thing, just as complete, just as definite as the personality of one man in distinction from that of other men. Each of the three Persons is a distinct and complete moral agent, having his own distinct understanding, will and consciousness. To prove that this is what is meant by ‘Persons’ in the Trinity, it is only necessary to remember that when we conceive of Peter, James, and John as persons, we conceive of them as being each a distinct and complete moral agent, and as having each his own distinct powers and faculties of moral agency. The three Persons, then, according to this definition, were in every intelligible sense three Gods; and accordingly, that identical phrase, ‘three Gods,’ was used by the preacher, more than once or twice—whether deliberately or inadvertantly we cannot tell—as the aptest formula to express *his* doctrine of three Divine Persons.”

The preacher subsequently explained to the reporter, that his statement was “misunderstood,” and that “the words were *extempore*, and from their liability to misapprehension as tritheistic, were *not wisely chosen*.”

We hardly expected this, in a discourse prepared with so much forethought, from one who had spent so many years in studying and teaching theology. Notwithstanding this disclaimer of *intentional* tritheism,—which no one supposes,—the above premises—“each of the three Persons, a distinct and complete moral agent, having his own distinct understanding, will and consciousness,” like “Peter, James, and John”—present to us “in every intelligible sense, three Gods.” This is the fair and logical deduction. A clear and active mind would perceive this result—quick and clear as a flash of light—and an ingenuous one, *off its guard*, bring it out as the inevitable result of the premises, and say fearlessly and truly that the three Persons are “three Gods;” though on a sober second thought, such a mind would perceive the slip, and be very likely to draw back. But if the preacher “was not there, when the [reporter’s] lash fell,” his *premises* were there, and the logical conclusion close by their side to share their fate. It is better not to propound a useless theory which is “not directly taught in the Scriptures,” for the sake of getting as far as possible from an alleged “heresy;” and safer for *both* parties to keep close to the Bible; then there will be no heresy to be rebutted, or “tritheism repudiated.”

In *The Congregationalist* for Aug. 17, 1849, there is a report of a sermon on the subject of the Trinity, preached in Boston on the previous Sabbath, by the worthy and venerable Dr. Lyman Beecher. It is given

us by a competent and responsible reporter ;\* and we may be sure, in *this* instance, that we have the sense of the preacher.

“ His first object was to define personality. As used among men, it is applied only to beings possessing intelligence, will and affections—the essential elements of free agency and accountability as subjects of law and moral government. Material things and animals are never called persons.

“ He concluded that the word person is not in the Bible applied to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, but asserted and proved that all the elements of personality as above defined were ascribed to each of them. To each is ascribed a separate intellect, will, affections, and actions. The Father *sent* the Son [as to his *Divine* nature ?] to be the propitiation for our sins. The Son left the bosom of the Father. He was with God, he was God, he made all things, he became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Where is it revealed that “ the Son *left* the bosom of the Father ?” It is written, “ The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father”—who is *pre-eminently beloved* and *honored* of the Father—who occupies the *highest place* of honor, friendship, intimacy, and affection. This is evidently spoken of the Messiah—the Son of God *after* the incarnation—“ the man Christ Jesus.” Was he not greatly *honored* in being appointed and sent forth as “ the Mediator be-

\* Dr. Edward Beecher, one of the editors of that paper.

tween God and men?" While executing his commission here on earth, did he not enjoy in a very high degree the *friendship, intimacy, and affection* of the Father? The language in question is never applied to the *Logos*, or the Word—the *Divine* nature of Christ *before* the incarnation; but to the Son of God *since* that event. There never was a time after the child Jesus was born till the Son of God expired on the cross, never since this event, and we may well be assured there never will be a period in all coming ages, when the Son is not "in the bosom of the Father." To say, then, that "the Son *left* the bosom of the Father," is a *supplement* to Divine revelation.

It is said above, "He (the *Son*) was with God, . . . . he became flesh and dwelt among us." In the Bible it is; "The *Logos*—the *Word* was with God. The same was *in the beginning* with God. The *Word* became flesh." But none of these things are said of the *Son* of God. The Scriptures do not so use that term. If we use it so, it must be used simply as a *proper name*, referring to his Divine nature, and meaning the same as the *Logos*, or the Word. But if it is used above, as it appears to be, to designate him as in reality the Son in his *Divine* nature—the *companion* of the Father in *eternity*—this is not so revealed. If it be true, we must wait for another revelation to teach it to us, before we are authorized to affirm it as Divine verity. Dr. George Hill, late Principal of St. Mary's College at St. Andrew's in Scotland, in his



“Lectures in Divinity” remarks ;\* “In the language of the New Testament, the Christ, or Messiah, and the Son of God, are used as *equivalent, interchangeable terms.*” So we regard it.

But further, from the report of the sermon. “All the attributes which constitute a real Divine personality are so ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as *agents distinct from* each other, that were there no doctrine of a Unity of the three taught, there would be evidence of the existence of three distinct and wholly independent Gods. The personality ascribed to them is a full and perfect personality. The personality is more clearly, definitely and practically revealed, than the unity of the Godhead. Each person has his own sphere in the work of redemption, each is worshiped, as God—and each regards the others with infinite affection.”

“They are united in ends, feelings, and plans ; but there is a higher unity than this. It is a unity that averts the idea of tritheism, and makes the three persons but one being, one God. But what is that by which this unity is effected ? Whether it is called *essence*, or *substance*, or *substratum*, it is something the nature of which is not revealed. Its effect is revealed ; it unites the three persons in one God.”

“Finally, he set forth in a most impressive light the delightful view given by this doctrine, of *infinitely blessed society in the Divine mind.* The idea of an

\* Philadelphia ed. 1844, p. 249.

infinite *solitary* being, devoid of all society of *his own grade*, is painful and chilling to the mind. Creatures cannot ever become the *peers* of God, or fully meet the *social wants* of his infinite nature. In the Trinity, these wants are met and fully satisfied. We rejoice in the joy of God, and feel that his joy is full."

We have now the *Tritheistic form* of the common theory of the Trinity, pretty fully and clearly set before us. But, in the *Biblical Repository* for October, 1849, there is an elaborate article on the Trinity, by Dr. Edward Beecher of Boston, Massachusetts, containing a more full development of this Tritheistic theory, than is contained in his report of the sermon of his venerable and ever-to-be venerated father, in part just quoted; from which article we make a few extracts. They will be chiefly taken from pages 728-732.

The author of the article says, that his "mode of reasoning is strictly philosophical;" because, "in the natural world, that theory is held to be true which accounts for all the facts and gives harmony to the system." He thinks that the theory of the Trinity which he advocates "gives an easy and adequate account of all these facts, and unites all parts of the Bible in one system. It is therefore true. On all sound principles of reasoning it must be true."

But all the facts are fully accounted for in the Scriptures, without *any theory at all*. It is no *theory* that God has revealed himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a well attested *fact*; and it is much more "philosophical"—aye, *reverential*—

to leave it where God has left it, than to undertake to explain his *unrevealed nature* by applying to the developments he has made of himself, such philosophy as *darkens* what he has made plain. God has told us, with sufficient plainness, that he has *so* revealed himself, to *glorify* himself in the *salvation* of *men* and in *promoting the welfare* of his great kingdom. This “gives an easy and adequate account of all these facts, and unites all parts of the Bible in one system.” Such presumptuous philosophy, therefore, as ventures beyond the boundaries of human knowledge in order to explain the mode of the Divine existence, “on all *sound* principles of reasoning” in such matters, “must be” *false*.

“It (this doctrine or theory) consists in the great, simple, majestic fact of infinite tripersonality.” This is similar to the statement made on the same subject, by the seven authors of a Review (of whom the writer of the article in question is one) in *The Christian Observatory* for June, 1849, p. 268: “That which distinguishes a Trinitarian from a Unitarian is this: A belief in an original three-foldness in the *nature* of God.” As to this grand distinction of “a Trinitarian from a Unitarian”—this exaltation of a *theory* to an eminence above great and momentous truths clearly revealed,—we have already remarked in this chapter; and those remarks apply equally to the statement just quoted. All the truths of the Bible can stand better—with far less incumbrance—without this theory than with it.

Further, from the article in the *Repository*. "But while we decline to adopt the generation and procession development of antiquity, we are free to confess that we prefer it to the ground assumed by some, that we do not know what *person* means, in the doctrine of the Trinity, and that it is some unknown, three-fold *distinction* in a God whose essence, will, and attributes are one. This is not what the Bible reveals. . . . . Its natural development is Sabellianism. . . . . It (the generation and procession development) presented, in its full power, *the great idea* of tripersonality in God."

"Absolute, unmitigated personal unity in an infinite mind, is a cold, *unsocial* idea. . . . . The desire of an *equal* to love, does not strike us as an imperfection in an infinite person; nay, it would seem to us imperfect without it. If this is so, what would be the *social state* of an infinite, eternal, solitary mind? Who, in the universe, could worthily understand and reciprocate the love of an infinite heart? Toward whom could such a heart overflow?" After expanding these thoughts in application to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as "three infinite, self-existent," companionable "minds," or spirits, the writer speaks "of delightful intercourse, and of perfect unity in thought, feeling, plans and action, between the blessed persons of the Trinity."

"These ideas lie on the face of the Scriptures. [Just as *green* lies on the face of the paper that is seen through green glasses.] They are the very things that

1. That there are in God "*three infinite, self-existent minds,*" or "*three distinct and competent moral agents,*" called "*Persons,*" *with three sets of Divine attributes.*

2. That these three infinite, self-existent minds, or distinct and competent moral agents, are *so united in one "essence, substance, or substratum,"* as to constitute *one Divine Spirit, or Being.* "It unites the three Persons in one God."

3. That these three infinite, self-existent minds, or "*Peers of God,*" furnish the great Jehovah with "*infinitely blessed society in the Divine mind,*"—"society of his own grade;" these separate and mutual Divine conditions being *essential* to "any clear view of the plan of redemption," to "fully meet the *social wants* of his infinite nature," to "the *mutual love*" of the Persons of the Godhead, and to their *individual and joint felicity.*

1. How does it appear, that there are "three infinite, self-existent minds"—"an original three-foldness in the *nature* of God,"—"three distinct and competent moral agents, each having his own distinct understanding, will, and consciousness," or "a separate intellect, will, affections, and actions," and all the attributes of the Godhead? It is not quite so clear as some seem to suppose, that all this is revealed in the Bible.

But we are told, (Bib. Repos.) that this theory ["*fact?*"] is taught in "those texts which imply or teach a *plurality* of persons in the Godhead;"—such as the following: Gen. 1:26; Let *us* make man in

*our* image, after *our* likeness. . 3 : 22 ; Behold, the man is become as one of *us*. 11 : 17 ; Let *us* go down and see. Deut. 6 : 4 ; Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God (literally *Gods*) is one Jehovah. Isa. 6 : 8 ; I heard the voice of Jehovah, saying, Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *us* ?

We had supposed that all able, thorough, and judicious critics had done quoting these and such like passages, as proof in the case, long ago. But almost anything, to prop up a tottering *theory*, which many intelligent Christians rather regard as a public nuisance to be abated.

Waving our own remarks for the present, we quote those of Prof. Stuart, on this point : \* “ Nor does the appeal to the *plural* forms of expression in the Old Testament justify the modes of representation in question ; [viz. “ *society*, and *covenanting transactions*, and *deliberative counsel*, and the like, in the Godhead itself ;’] such as, ‘ Let us make man ; Let us go down and see ; The man is become as one of us ; Who will go for us ?’ and the like. All these modes of expression seem naturally to spring from the almost continual use of the plural form *Elohim*, as the name of God. But he who has well studied the genius of the Hebrew language, must know that this often makes an *intensitive* signification of words by employing the *plural* number ; and particularly that this is the fact in regard to words designating *dominion*, *lordship*, etc.

\* Bib. Repos. July, 1835, pp. 102, 3.

Such is the case not only with *Elohim*, but also with many others, even when they designate single objects. *Elohim*, is for the most part as much as to say, *supreme God*. But if any still insist on the argument to be drawn from this, as evincing of itself a *plurality* in the Godhead, what shall be said of its use in Ps. 45 : 6, 7, where first the *Son* and then the *Father* is each respectively called *Elohim* ? Is there then a plurality of persons in the *Son*, and in the *Father* too ?

“ It is then on the ground of this plurality as to form in the name of God, that we may most naturally account for such modes of expression as, ‘ Let us make man,’ etc. At all events, the subject of such plurality of names is encompassed with so many difficulties; when viewed in any other light, that nothing positive can safely be built upon it, in respect to *plurality* in the Godhead; an expression, by the way, against which the graver or more cautious writers on the subject of the Trinity are often warning us, because of its *polytheistic* aspect.”

Prof. Knapp also remarks,\* respecting the ancient use of the word before us, (*Elohim*,) that it is derived from an Arabic word, which signifies to *reverence*, to *honor*, to *worship*. “ Hence (he says) it comes to pass that it is frequently applied to kings, magistrates, judges, and others to whom reverence is shown, and who are regarded as the representatives of the Deity upon earth. Ps. 82 : 6. Ex. 7 : 1. . . . . The

\* Theology, p. 93.

plural of this word, *Elohim*, although it denotes but one subject, is appropriately used to designate Jehovah by way of eminence. In this fact, many theologians have thought they perceived an allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity, though they have *no sufficient ground* for supposing that this doctrine was known *at so early a period*. And without resorting to this supposition, the application of this plural name to a singular subject may be explained from an idiom of the ancient oriental and some other languages, by which anything *great* or *eminent* was expressed in the plural number, (*pluralis dignitatis*, or *majestaticus*.) Accordingly, *Eloha*, (the singular,) *augustus*, [majestic,] may be considered as the positive degree, of which *Elohim*, (the plural,) *augustissimus*, [most majestic,] is the superlative.”

We have here the critical judgment—with reasons hard to gainsay—of two eminent Biblical scholars, one from the Western and one from the Eastern continent, in regard to the *evidence* of a plurality of persons in the nature of God, to be derived from “the plural forms of expression in the Old Testament.” This, perhaps, is sufficient. Much more need not be said on this point ; but we will add a few things.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in HIS own image.” This language is understood to express *determination*, —“And God *determined* to make man in his own image, after his own likeness,”—without supposing that he also intended to teach us thereby, the mode of his



existence. "God *said*," is a form of expression used throughout the narrative: "God said, Let there be light, and there was light"—'God determined to create light, and light was.' Does the language require us to believe that he literally *spake* thus? or simply that such was his determination, consequent upon which the thing existed? 'God determined to make man. So God created man.' The Scriptures usually speak of God very much after the manner of men; as having eyes, ears, a mouth, a hand, an arm; as seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, stretching out his hand. It is said; "God *came* from Teman—he had horns coming out his hand—thou didst *ride* upon thine horses—thou didst *march* through the land in indignation—thou didst *walk* through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters—he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak." Yet we are not to construe these expressions literally; but to seek out their true sense—the *truth*—intended to be communicated by the terms. When a *man* is about to do an important thing, and wishes to proceed with deliberation and act with discretion, he considers with himself, and perhaps speaks audibly: "Let us consider—let us see what to do." When he has determined on the thing, he may speak out, and say: "I will do this, or that." But in so saying, he does not intend to tell us anything as to the origin or mode of his existence. He is *deliberating*, so as to come to a *wise*

*determination.* That is the object of his method of proceeding.

God does not, like man, need to deliberate, in order to act wisely—at least, he has not told us so; but he makes himself and his doings known to us in language conformed to the manner of men; leaving it for common sense to decide as to the meaning of what he says of himself, for the *express purpose of being understood*—not for the purpose of *casting a mist* before our eyes, so that we cannot see what he means—not to cause contention, uncharitableness, alienation and discord among those whom he would teach the knowledge of himself and his works. God seems, by the language under consideration, to have intended to teach us, that he came to a *wise determination* in respect to man's creation—that man is the product of Divine *wisdom*, as well as power.

But it is claimed that the plural form in Hebrew, *Elohim*, teaches this doctrine of tripersonality in the nature of God. Why then does not the same *plural form* in Ex. 21 : 4, 6, denote plurality of persons in *man*? “If his master [*adonim*, masters] have given him a wife,” &c. “Then his master [plural, *masters*] shall bring him unto the *judges*; [*elohim*, gods—magistrates;] . . . . and his master [*adonim*, masters] shall bore,” &c. How would it sound, if these plurals were rendered into *English*? Quite as well as to “call *Charlemagne* the great *emperors*, to denote his special dignity!” (*Bib. Repos.* p. 715;) or to say in *English*, “Jehovah our *Gods* is one Je-

hovah." This mode of expression accords with the *Hebrew* idiom, but not with the English ; and therefore to put that idiom into English in order to render it ridiculous, is not fair or sound argumentation. The plural *pronoun* is used, not only in Hebrew but in English, as it is in the question, "Who will go for *us*?" but not the plural *name*. Thus it is in the forms of royalty ; as we remember to have read in our boyhood : "WE ——— by the grace of God, *king* [not *kings*] of Great Britain, France and Ireland, *defender* [not *defenders*] of the faith," etc. This idiom is common—not to say universal—with editors (*sole* editors) and writers of reviews ; and that too with the *discrimination* just noticed. Nay ; this very writer of the article in question has observed it himself, p. 791 : "So far as the wants of *our own mind* [not *minds*] are concerned, *we* would much sooner believe in three separate, infinite, self-existent spirits," &c. He may say *we*, and *our* ; but to speak of his own *minds*, "to denote special dignity," is as far from being idiomatic, as "calling Charlemagne the great *emperors*."

Moreover, the idiom of a language cannot be transferred to another language, without doing more or less violence to its idiom. Accordingly, the *Seventy* learned Jews who translated the Old Testament into Greek, hence called the *Septuagint*—a part of it, the *Pentateuch*, between two and three centuries before the Christian era—have observed this principle. They have translated *Elohim* in the *singular*, (ὁ θεός) as it

is in our translation of the Bible. *They*, surely, understood the meaning of the word ; but they have given no intimation that it denotes *plurality* in God. The writers of the New Testament, in their quotations from the ancient Scriptures, have uniformly done the same thing. But none of them, if *Elohim* (designating the true God) teaches plurality in his *nature*, have given us the sense of that word in their translation or quotations. Would they not have done so had such been the fact ? and would not *fidelity*, in so important a matter as this is represented to be, have required it of them ?

So, in Ex. 21 : 4, 6 ; the *Seventy* have rendered the Hebrew plural of *masters*, into the *singular*, (ὁ κύριος—master,) as in our Bible. In like manner, our translators have observed the English idiom, in rendering other plural words. In Ps. 45 : 17 ; 47 : 1, 3, 9, and other places, they have rendered plural words—plural also in the *Septuagint*—(λαοί, ἔθνη, λαοὺς,) in the *singular*—“people.” Bishop Horsley has designedly violated the idiom of our language, by rendering it in the *plural* form, “peoples,” not only to give the *sense* but the *form* of the original. It is true that *people* is a noun of multitude ; but not more so than *nation*, and that in the *singular*. The word (ἔθνη) *people*, here means, as it often does, nations, as distinguished from the Jews ; i. e. the *heathen*,—a word derived from ἔθνη, —*gentiles*, *pagans* ; a sense which the mere English reader hardly gets. Such is the *rendering* in Ps. 44 : 2 ; “How thou didst drive out

the *heathen* with thy hand." It is idiomatic in our language, to address an *individual* in the use of the *plural* pronoun *you*, with a *plural* verb ; as—" *you are the author ;*" for "*thou art the author.*" But this cannot be transferred to another language without violence to its idiom. [Try it, in Latin or Greek, to name no other language : *Vos quoque, Brute !*]

But the plural form designating an individual, is used in *Hebrew* to denote *rank, authority, respect, reverence, sovereignty* ; but not, so far as appears, to express *plurality* in the individual to whom it is applied. Such is the fact in Exodus 21 : 4, 6 ; already quoted. So in Ex. 7 : 1 : "Jehovah said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a *god (elohim—gods)* to Pharaoh"—in accordance with Hebraistic idiom. In 2 Chron. 10 : 9, and 1 Kings 12 : 9, the *plural form* denotes *sovereignty* ; as in other passages referred to. King Rehoboam, who had rejected the counsel of the old men, said to the young men, "What advice give ye, that *we* [the king] may return answer to this people which have spoken to *me* ?"—singular and plural both, as in the question, "Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *us* ?" In the latter passage, as Prof. Knapp remarks (p. 132), "the plural form may be explained either as *pluralis majestaticus* [the plural of majesty or supremacy], or as denoting an assembly for consultation. The chiefs of heaven are described as there collected ; and God puts to them the question, *whom shall we make our messenger ?*" This latter representation is found in 1 Kings 22 : 19–22 : "I saw Je-

hovah sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left. [*Literally* so?] And Jehovah said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will persuade him. And Jehovah said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so."

Should there be a doubt as to the meaning of this plural form, in any of the passages just quoted—whether it truly and properly denotes sovereignty or supremacy—that doubt may be removed, by considering another example, which appears to be decisive. (Ezra 4 : 11, 18.) In the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, certain disaffected persons—enemies to the rebuilding of the house of God at Jerusalem—prepared a letter which they "sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king;" to whom he made reply, "Peace, and at such a time. The letter which ye sent unto us [Artaxerxes the king] hath been plainly read before me." He then, in the exercise of his individual sovereignty, ordered the work to cease; and it ceased accordingly. Here is no allusion whatever to any "assembly for consultation." Nothing appears but the determination of a *despotic monarch*, asserting his own supremacy in the use of the *plural form*, common in



the Apocalypse, Rev. 19 : 10, when the latter fell at his feet to worship him : " See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant : worship God." The same thing is repeated in ch. 22 : 9. After the angel had ascended in the flame that went up from the altar, and thus left them, and they "knew that he was an *angel* of Jehovah," Manoah said, " We shall surely die, because we have seen *God*"—*Elohim*. They simply used it as a term of respect and reverence, which they applied to one whom they understood to be an *angel*.

In the thirty-second chapter of Exodus, the same plural word is used several times, to designate the *golden calf* which Aaron made for the people to worship. The people said to Aaron, " Up, make us gods, [*elohim*, a god,] which shall go before us ; for, as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him." And he made " a molten calf ;" and they said, " *These* [plural pronoun too] be thy *gods*, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And Aaron " built an altar before it."—v. 5. " Then I cast it (the gold) into the fire, and there came out *this calf*."—v. 24. In the whole narrative, there is no allusion whatever to more than *one* image, and the whole account shows that there was but one. And yet *elohim* is applied to it, just as it is to Jehovah, and to the false gods before mentioned. The *Seventy*, contrary to their usual custom, render this word here, in the plural—gods. To be consistent with their general practice, both *they* and our English translators should



have rendered the word in the *singular*—a god: “Make us a *god*, &c., as for this Moses,”—our leader, ruler, *elohim*,—“we know not what has become of him. And they made a *calf* in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the *idol*.”—Acts 7: 40, 41. The passage here quoted, gives us the *plural*, “gods;” doubtless taken from the *Septuagint*, the version of the Scriptures in most common use among the Jews at that time.

But this is not all. This plural form is used in a similar manner in the New Testament. The apostle Paul uses it in the same way, and for the same *general* purpose for which it is used in the passages which have been quoted from the Old Testament. Into the Corinthian church which he had gathered, false teachers had intruded themselves, who endeavored to injure him in the estimation of that church, and to set at naught his *claims* and his *authority* as an apostle of Jesus Christ. They took advantage of his absence and long delay to visit that interesting field of his labors, to make good their false accusations. In his *defense* of himself from the charges brought against him, (2 Cor. c. 10–13,) he goes into a particular account of the matter, boldly maintains his rightful claims to the apostleship, and asserts his *authority*, in a style of address suited to the occasion. “If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ’s, even so are *we* Christ’s.—(10 : 7.) Let such an one think this, that such as *we are* in word by letters when *we* are absent,

*such will we be also in deed, when we are present.*—(v. 11.) But *we* will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which *God* hath distributed to *us*, a measure to reach even unto you.”—(v. 13.) This style runs through the remainder of the epistle; in which this apostle shows, (11 : 28,) that he has “daily, the care of all the churches.” Here is the firm language of his asserted *claim* to be an authorized apostle, expressed in the appropriate *style* of authority—the plural forms of the Old Testament, and the common form of claiming and publicly asserting authority of supremacy, (so in Gal. 1 : 8, 9,) in all ages.

There is no good reason to believe that this plural form of expression, of which we have been speaking, was adopted by ancient kings—Jewish or pagan—from the language employed by God respecting himself, in the Bible; but very good reasons to the contrary. The derivation of the word in question from the Arabic, as mentioned by Prof. Knapp, and the fact that God speaks to us in the language and after the manner of men, *in order that he may be clearly understood by men*, prove this conclusively. He speaks of himself as “A GREAT KING,” and as having a kingdom, a throne, a scepter—all taken from the usages and the language of men; not adopted by men from God’s representation of his doings, or of the mode of his existence.

This whole argument in favor of a plurality of persons in the *nature* of God, from the plural forms of expression in the Old Testament, is too regardless of

the Hebrew idiom, too fanciful, and too arbitrary, to have any weight with critics who are not incorrigibly devoted to a *troublesome theory*.

As to the evidence in favor of the Tritheistic theory, from Matt. 28 : 19, we have but a word to say. The writer of the article in question remarks respecting it: "No view is at all consistent or even tolerable but this, that this passage was designed to present to the mind the three Divine persons or agents by whom salvation is secured, and the work of each in all its parts."—p. 719. The preceding statement seems "consistent" with nothing but this Tritheistic theory, or absolute tritheism; nor is it "even tolerable," as a representation of what the Scriptures teach on the subject. This passage, in connection with the rest of the New Testament, reveals to us God—"the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," with special reference to the commencement, progress, and completion of the work of man's salvation. This is not *theory*—but REVEALED TRUTH. But, "three distinct and competent moral agents in the *nature* of God," is *theory*, and *not* REVEALED *truth*. Under one or another of the above or similar terms, and in various connections, God has revealed his purposes of mercy to man, and all the momentous truths of redemption by Jesus Christ. If we go beyond the record, we pass the boundaries of human knowledge on this subject, and enter the illimitable field of human speculation, contradiction, and absurdity.

Other passages adduced by this writer as evidence of

the truth of this theory, are examined elsewhere, on these pages.

2. The *second* topic to be considered under this Triththeistic theory, is, that these three infinite, self-existent minds, or distinct and competent moral agents, are *so united in one* "*essence, substance, or substratum*, as to constitute *one Divine Spirit, or Being*. "It unites the three Persons in one God."

The reason, then, that they are not, in every intelligible sense, "three distinct and wholly independent Gods," is, confessedly, their union in the *manner defined*.

*What*, then, is this supposed *entity*, called by any one of three names, which—out of three infinite, self-existent minds, three distinct and competent moral agents, three Persons as really distinct, in every *other* sense, as Peter, James and John—so unites them as to constitute one God? "It is something [as before quoted], the *nature* of which is not revealed." But how do we know that this hidden substratum is a *reality*, and not a scholastic *fiction*? Is it *revealed* as a reality? This does not appear on the pages of inspiration. It is revealed that there is one, *only* one, living and true God—"the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." These three, in the language of a certain "Minority Report" on the subject of the Trinity, are "three subsistences in the Divine nature;" that is, each of the three has a "real being" there.—(*Webster*.) Each must have a "real being"—a real existence—or be a non-entity. Where is it revealed that

"three subsistences," or three Persons, in the *Divine nature*, are united, by means of a common substratum, in one God? Christ, "the Son of man" and "the Son of God," says: "I am in the Father and the Father in me. I and my Father are one." But this language does not teach, or imply, that he refers to a union of his *Divine nature* with the "distinct person" of the Father. Plainly, it is a union of "the Son of man" with "the Father that dwelt in him." But no such language is ever used in reference to the Holy Spirit and the Father; and no *such* union as is *claimed* between the Holy Spirit and the Father is ever affirmed in the Scriptures.

What do any of us *know* about this substratum? We are told there "must be" *something* to unite the "three subsistences," "the three distinct Persons, in one God;" and we may as well call it by this name—*substratum*—as anything else; seeing it is that respecting the *nature* of which we know nothing. But what *valid evidence* is there, that there is a "something" which unites three sets of Divine attributes in one God; when it is not revealed that three sets of Divine attributes exist at all? We know nothing of any substratum which unites *one* set of Divine attributes in God. All we *know* is, that God possesses certain qualities, and that he performs certain acts of different kinds or classes which we properly refer to him as their author; and we say, in reference to these qualities and to each class of acts—as a matter of convenience in thinking, writing, and speaking on the sub-

ject—that he *has* such and such *attributes*—e. g. omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, benevolence, etc. But none of us *know* anything of their being united in a *substratum*. We only know that they belong to God ; and hence we say—referring them to him—that he has these several attributes. Should it be said, that we cannot *conceive* of these attributes as belonging to the Divine mind, or as existing, unless they are united in a substance or substratum ; the proper reply would be, that we can conceive of it as well *without* the supposed substratum as *with* it. That does not *aid* its conception at all. It is sufficient to know and to say, that God *possesses* the attributes and *performs* the acts in question. This appears to be the limit of human knowledge on the subject ; and the supposed yet unknown substratum, does not help us beyond that limit one hair's breadth—unless it be into mist and absurdity. If we are *otherwise* incapable of conceiving of the thing, that is proof positive of no such *entity* as is claimed, but only of our *incapacity*. The truth is not dependent for its existence or its nature on our capacity to *conceive* of it. Water has been converted into ice, whether we have seen it or can *so conceive* of it or not.

Again ; do we know anything *definitely*, respecting this substratum ? Are we *sure* it has a “real being ?” Where is the evidence ? Take away from anything its *attributes*, and what remains ? Take away from matter *one* of its attributes—extension—and what is left ? Merely a mathematical *point*, without any uniting sub-

stance or any attributes at all. Take away from the true God his attributes, or *suppose* them taken away, and what is left? Where is the uniting substratum? It is *gone*; and we know not that it was ever there. The only thing, after all, which prevents the Tritheistic theory of the Trinity from being *pure tritheism*, in every possible sense of the word, is, so far as human knowledge is concerned, a mere *non-entity*. God has indeed a *nature*, including the whole of what he is; but the evidence that there is a God, to whom certain properties or attributes belong, does not prove a *substratum*. No evidence of its existence has been produced, but simple *assumption*; and this, "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaves not a wreck behind."

But still, they tell us we cannot prove that this distinction of three Persons in the Divine nature, united in one substratum, is absurd or inconsistent with the Divine unity, because we do not know anything about it—it is "an awful mystery." That is, they hide the subject in the thickest Egyptian darkness, where none of us can see or *feel* anything but darkness itself, and then tell us we cannot *prove*, amid total darkness, what it requires *light* either to prove or disprove! It is indeed "a mystery," or rather a thick *mist* cast before our eyes, to shun the labor of explanation and proof, and to conceal the absurdity which would *otherwise* be a little too glaring. We might say in return, that *they cannot prove* there is any such distinction in the *nature* of God, or any such union of three Persons in a common substratum, as they affirm. We may fairly

put this theory with those of "eternal generation" and "eternal procession," and say of them all, as Dr. Emmons says of the latter two, that they are "*such* mysteries as cannot be distinguished from real absurdities."\*

But we have not yet done with the Tritheistic form of the common theory of the Trinity. A few things more must be said of the word *person*, as used in this theory, in a peculiar sense. "It (the word) is applied only to beings possessing intelligence, will and affections." To such beings it is applicable. It is applied to men and to God. And it is as appropriate and as scriptural, when applied to *angelic* existence, as when it is applied to *Divine* existence.

Suppose, then, that God sends to this world an embassy of three angelic persons, equal in intellect, knowledge, holiness, and all personal attributes, and united together in one Divine *commission*—this embassy furnishes as good an example of one angelic being, as three Divine persons, each with his own distinct intellect, susceptibility, will, and other Divine attributes, all united in one scholastic *substratum*, does of one Divine being. This Divine commission forms as *complete a union* of three such angelic persons in one complex being, constituting a trinity in unity, as a conceivable or even *possible* scholastic entity does of three Divine persons in one complex being, constituting a Trinity in unity. The persons in each case are repre-

\* Sermons, v. 1, p. 81, ed. 1815.



sented as equally distinct, equally competent moral agents, equally well united in one, having the same nature, and perfectly harmonious.

Indeed, we might go farther ; for the materials have been furnished ready to our hands, in a defense of the common theory of the Trinity. A Reverend Doctor in one of the high places of the church, appearing in marked opposition to the "heretical" views of a neighbor, said in his own pulpit, that "the several Persons of the Trinity are as distinct from each other as Peter, James and Paul." We have, then, only to consider these three good men "full of the Holy Ghost," united in one Divine *commission* to evangelize the nations, and going forth together with one heart in their work ; and we have three persons in one complex being, constituting a *human* trinity in unity. In each case—angelic, scholastic, and human trinity—the three persons have alike the attributes of three fully competent moral agents, are equally distinct, and are as really united in one complex being, constituting a trinity in unity, in one case as much as in either of the others. The union is none the less complete when formed by a Divine commission, than by a scholastic substratum. The persons in each of the three trinities, are alike "three in one respect, and one in another respect."

It has been further said, in illustration of this subject, that "when an army is said to be 'one body,' it means that though composed of thousands of bodies, there is one respect in which they cannot be considered

as two.”\* But there is this wide *difference* between the *army* and the *Trinity*. In the latter, one Person, one agent, comprehends, virtually, the physical and moral force (so to speak) of the *whole* Trinity. It is so; or, according to the theory we are considering, there are—contrary to the Bible—three Gods. But in an army of ten thousand men, one person, one agent, includes only one ten-thousandth *part* of the physical and moral force of the whole army. They are no *less* ten thousand distinct agents—ten thousand men, because they are *united* in *one* army—“one body;” the soul of which is the will of their commander. But they have ten thousand distinct and independent wills—just like any other ten thousand men—and if they choose they can rebel, and scatter to the four winds. How does such a union in “one body” help our conceptions of a scholastic Trinity, or make it any the less absurd? We might say, in like manner, that the whole *human* race are *one*, in some important respects—one in their common father—one still, as a *race*, properly designated by the word *man*; as the three Persons in the common theory of the Trinity are designated by the word *God*. Those of the latter have one and the same *nature*; and so have those of the former.

In the scholastic theory of the Trinity, as it is commonly represented, when we view the Father sending the Son, considered in respect to his *Divine nature*, and both uniting to send the Holy Spirit, considered as

\* Difficulties of Religion, p. 232.

a competent moral agent distinct from two other competent moral agents, it seems impossible for the mind to be satisfied that the three are truly equal. Make what effort we please—try as hard as we can—it is extremely difficult, not to say *impossible*, to rid ourselves of the impression—the real, practical *conviction*—that the *Father* only is supreme; and that the Son and Spirit are subordinate, not only in office, but in nature.

This tritheistic theory, after all the statements and explanations which have accompanied it, does really comprise and set forth “three Gods.” Common minds—for whom the gospel was especially intended—whatever efforts they or their teachers may make to the contrary—can hardly fail so to understand and receive it. Indeed, there is only a metaphysical, hair-splitting distinction between this theory and *bald tritheism*—a distinction without a difference.

3. The *third* topic to be considered in this theory is, that these three infinite, self-existent minds, or “*Peers of God*,” furnish the great Jehovah—with “*infinitely blessed society in the Divine mind*”—“*society of his own grade* ;” these separate and mutual Divine conditions being *essential* to “any clear view of the plan of redemption,” to “fully meet the *social wants* of his infinite nature,” to “the *mutual love*” of the Persons of the Godhead, and to their *individual and joint felicity*.

Society in a mind, the society of *three* minds “in the *Divine mind*.” What an idea! Every mind has the

"society" (if we may call it so) of its own thoughts, feelings, conceptions, plans, purposes, etc. Newton had not a little *pleasant* "*society*" in his own mind, while engaged in his investigations and discoveries in science. The man who has committed some great crime, and is in consequence confined in a solitary cell, has not the most *agreeable* "*society*" which can be imagined. But, as to the idea of "three infinite, self-existent *minds*," three Persons furnishing "infinitely blessed society in the *Divine MIND*"—"society of his own grade"—three "Peers of God" in one Divine Being, associating together, deliberating, counseling, planning, covenanting with one another; one of them "eternally generated" by another, and by him sent to execute his purposes; one "eternally proceeding" from two, and sent by them both to complete the work before commenced; "these are *notions* which may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree." Some of them seem hardly "orthodox." When were these "notions" revealed—to whom—where found in the Book of revelation? Or, are they the creatures of the imagination, the productions of metaphysical philosophy?

There seems to be no good reason for the effort made by one of these writers, to keep up a distinction between *mind* and *spirit*; using *mind* to designate each Person of the Trinity taken separately; and *spirit*, the Being in whom they are all united in one. John Howe—a name greatly and justly revered—speaks, in the passage already quoted, of "three distinct, eternal *spirits*, each having his own distinct, singular, intelli-

gent nature, united . . . . in the one God." In the report of the sermon preached in Boston, the reader may have already noticed that the preacher spoke of "infinitely blessed society in the Divine *mind*," not *spirit*. But whether this is the language of the preacher or of the reporter, does not appear. The Divine mind, is God ; as really as the Divine spirit. Three Divine minds, or three Divine spirits, are "three distinct and wholly independent Gods." This distinction is observed, apparently, to shun the obvious appearance of absurdity or tritheism. But it is an *arbitrary* distinction, without a difference. He might as well have used these two words in the *reverse* order.

Nor does it appear, from the Scriptures, that three Persons in the nature of God, exercise "ardent mutual love" toward each other. He who was "the Son of man" and "the Son of God," said, when on earth, "The Father loveth the Son ;" and this Son loved the Father with ardent affection. But it is not said, "the Father loveth" the Logos, or the Holy Spirit ; or they him. This representation is a part of that scholastic philosophy which is everywhere apparent. "Society in the Divine mind," is likewise a part of the same philosophy. God has not told us anything of his "social state"—or whether any such state appertains to "an infinite mind"—any more than he has of the mode of his existence. All his teachings relative to the subject in any way have the *contrary* aspect. It is bald assumption.

As was said above, every mind may enjoy the "so-

ciety" of his own thoughts, feelings, purposes, &c. ; and if it can plan great and noble deeds for noble ends, with the infallible certainty that its purposes will be accomplished, here is enjoyment of the highest order—"society" even for "an infinite, self-existent mind." What *human* mind is not, in a similar way, furnished with rich and abundant sources of enjoyment? But when we consider an *infinite* mind, possessing inexhaustible resources of every kind, of which we can form no adequate conception whatsoever—such a mind, forming its plans and purposes in eternity, and all along carrying them into effect far back in ages past; yea, millions of centuries, it may be, beyond our utmost conceptions of past eternity; and then as much farther back, and farther still, to a period *all but* infinitely remote—whither our imaginations cannot fly, though moving for ages with lightning-speed—this infinite Being all the while extending his dominions, by the multiplication of worlds and systems diffused through the immensity of space, and peopling the universe with innumerable intelligences of his own beneficent creating;—when we consider these things, shall we speak or think of him as "a *solitary* God?" Shall we set our imaginations or our philosophy to furnish SUCH A BEING with "equals to love"—"society of his own grade," that he may have "delightful intercourse" with his "Peers," and thus be infinitely happy! If so, what will not human philosophy undertake to do for God, in order to "fully meet the *social wants* of his infinite nature?"

It is to be presumed that God has *always* taken care to have objects enough to love, in order to be happy ; and that he is able still to take such care successfully, without the aid of scholastic philosophy. Were all of us at *liberty* to follow our own views of what is lovely and sublime, in the mutual love and perfect social intercourse of infinite, self-existent minds in God, we might carry this "great idea" still farther. We might *then* say, that no reason appears, *from the nature of the case*, why there may not be a much *larger* number, as well as *three* such minds, united in one substratum. Why, then, may there not be an *indefinite* number of such minds thus united, and filling immensity—a number far beyond our finite conceptions to comprehend—thus magnifying our views of infinitely blessed society in God ? What an idea ! How affecting and sublime ! It throws that other "great idea" so far into the shade as to render it hardly visible.

In our honest endeavors to find in the great Jehovah, "society of his own grade," we should take care that we do not lay ourselves open to the Divine rebuke : "Thou thoughtest that *I* was altogether such an one as *thyself*." What ! Shall we deify the creatures of our own imagination, and then demand that others shall render to these images all that reverence which is due to the God of the Bible ? Shall we "sit and speak against our brother," and refuse him that charity and fellowship which are due to him as a Christian and a minister of Christ, because we do not relish all his philosophy, or all the flights of his fancy ever

on the wing? But what fancy was ever more erratic, more extravagant, more daring, more lawless, more reprehensible, than that which presumes to enter the third heaven, and there busies itself with forming a society of equals for the *ONE only living and true God!* Such fancy may yet receive a rebuke from Him who sitteth on the throne, and be told to come down from its aspirings, and keep its proper place; and its possessor—however able his intellect or fruitful his fancy—to be *content* with “receiving the kingdom of God as a *little child*.” “If I were *hungry*, I would not tell *THEE!*” God does not need our aid in providing for him social intercourse and happiness. And it becomes us all to keep our imaginations and our philosophizing within due bounds, in matters appertaining to God; to be humble, docile, obedient, charitable, long-suffering, forbearing, forgiving, lovers of “the brotherhood,” and faithful followers of him who “went about doing good,” and “died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.” Let us *ACT* as though we had not forgotten that the right of private judgment, the rights of conscience, and the right of forming and expressing our own views of Divine truth, belong alike to all; but *recompense*, to the *LORD*.

It has been further argued in favor of the common theory of the Trinity, in *each* of its forms, that the Bible uses the three personal pronouns, *I, Thou, He*, in application to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; implying mutual address, and communication with each other as distinct Persons, in eternity. But it is evi-



dent that there is much more plausibility in this argument before examination than real weight to it afterward. Indeed, after considerable search, we have not been able to find anything which deserves to be called *argument* on the subject; though a traditionary *statement* of this kind is very common.

We commenced the examination of this particular topic with the following inquiries distinctly before the mind: *How* are these pronouns applied to the Persons of the Trinity? And how do the Father and the Holy Spirit speak *of* and *to* each other? After searching the Scriptures for hours without finding any satisfactory answer to the latter question, and then for other hours with as little success, we at length came to the conclusion—which subsequent examination has confirmed—that *the Father, the Logos (the Word), and the Holy Spirit, never address each other*. It is believed, after a careful examination, that there is no such representation of this subject, as some have claimed, to be found in the Scriptures. If it were so represented, *before the commencement of this world's probation*, the argument would be much more plausible than it is.

When the Scriptures represent the Father as addressing the Son, or the Son the Father—before the incarnation—we believe it will be found, on careful examination, that there is always *prophetic* reference to the *Messiah*, the Father addressing, or speaking *of*, the Son by *anticipation*, and the Son the Father. A few examples will serve for illustration. One is found in Ps. 2 : 7-12: "I will declare the decree: the Lord

hath said unto me, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." This is evidently an address, not to the *Divine nature* of Christ, but to the *future Messiah*. Prof. Knapp remarks respecting it : " This Psalm was always understood by the Jews, and by the writers of the New Testament, to relate to *the Messiah*. But he is here represented under the image of a king, to whose government, according to the will of God, all must submit. And it is the dignity of this king, or Messiah, of which the Psalmist appears here to speak. . . . . The passage would then mean, *Thou art the king (Messiah) of my appointment : this day have I solemnly declared thee such*. That the phrase *to-day* alludes to the resurrection of Christ, is proved by a reference to Acts 13 : 30-34. The writers of the New Testament everywhere teach that Christ was proved to be the Messiah by his resurrection from the dead. Rom. 1 : 3, 4. In this Psalm, therefore, the Messiah is rather exhibited as *king*, divinely-appointed ruler, and head of the church, than as belonging to the Divine nature."\* Of course, then, it is not the *Divine nature* which is here addressed, but the *future Messiah*.

The same is true of Psalm 110 : 1 : " Jehovah said unto my Lord (Messiah), Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Here, Jehovah is plainly *distinguished* from the Messiah. " Sit on my right hand, until *I* (Jehovah) completely subdue

\* Theology, p. 132, 3.

thine enemies." It is, therefore, *prophetically* addressed to the *Messiah*, not to his Divine nature. It is *clearly so* ; otherwise, the representation would be, that the first Person of the Trinity, possessing all the Divine attributes, engages to subdue the enemies of the second Person of the Trinity, possessing likewise all the Divine attributes—either "numerically the same," or those which are "similar or equal"—but yet *not sufficient* for the subjugation of his enemies ! From such an interpretation of the passage, if *duly considered*, the common sense of men will surely turn away.

The passage in Ps. 40 : 7, 8, is also to be understood as prophetic anticipation. But this will be particularly considered in another place.

Psalms 45 : 6, 7. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever : the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness : therefore God, [therefore, O God,] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." "That this whole Psalm relates to the Messiah, has been generally believed by Jewish and Christian commentators."—(*Stuart.*)

Respecting this passage, Prof. Knapp remarks, that "the name *Elohim* is sometimes given to earthly kings. It does not, therefore, necessarily prove that the person to whom it is here given must be of the Divine nature." Prof. Stuart also says of it : "that the whole Psalm relates to the Messiah, as *mediatorial* king, can scarcely be doubted by any one who compares together

all its different parts. The king is called *Elohim*, God. Does the word *God* here denote the *Divine*, or the *kingly* nature or condition of the Messiah? Most interpreters, who admit the doctrine of the Savior's Divine nature, contend for the first of these senses, as I have myself once done in a former publication. But further examination has led me to believe that there are grounds to doubt of such an application of the word *God*, in this passage. The king, here called God, has for himself a God: '*thy God hath anointed thee.*' The same king has *associates*, i. e. others who in some respects are in a similar condition or office. As *Divine*, who are *associates* with the Savior? Besides, his equity, his government, his state, as described in Ps. 45th, are all such as belong to the *king Messiah*."\*

That this passage is a *prophetic* address to the Messiah, in reference to a period *subsequent* to his first personal appearance on earth, can hardly admit of a reasonable doubt. Such is its general bearing, as treated in the first chapter to the Hebrews.

Zechariah 13 : 7, is often quoted, not as an *address* of the Father to the Son, but as a declaration of the Father respecting the Son—the *second Person* of the Trinity: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

\* Com. on Heb., v. 2. p. 58.

Let us first consider to *whom* this statement had original reference. "*Awake*, O sword, against my shepherd ;" the *imperative* for the *future* ; as is common in prophetic writings : meaning, "the sword shall awake—be actively employed—against my shepherd." But who is "my shepherd?"

God is called the *shepherd* of his people. The twenty-third Psalm commences with the declaration : "Jehovah is my *shepherd* ; I shall not want." In the eightieth Psalm, the writer thus begins his address : "Give ear, O *Shepherd* of Israel ; thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." In the *fourth* verse, this shepherd is addressed as "Jehovah, God of hosts." In Ps. 79 : 13, it is said : "So we thy people, and *sheep* of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever." Jehovah was the shepherd, or supreme ruler of his people Israel : he governed and protected them, and supplied their wants.

Those whom God appointed as rulers under him, were *under-shepherds*. In Jer. 23 : 2, 4, it is said : "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, against the *pastors* [shepherds] that feed my people ; Ye have scattered the *flock*, and driven them away. And I will set up *shepherds* over them, which shall feed them." In Ezek. 24 : 8, God says : "neither did my *shepherds* search for the flock ; but the *shepherds* feed themselves, and feed not the *flock*. In Isa. 44 : 28, he says of Cyrus : "he is my *shepherd*, and shall perform all my pleasure."

In Zech. 11 : 16, 17, Jehovah says of the "*foolish*

shepherd :” “ For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd [a ruler] in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off. Woe to the idol shepherd [the unfaithful ruler—scribes, priests, and doctors of the law—] that leaveth the flock.” In the next chapter (12 : 5, 6), these shepherds are called “ the *governors* of Judah” —the plural being sometimes used, and sometimes the *singular*—one for a *class* : “ In that day I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf ; and *they shall devour all the people round about.*” God is threatening evil against “ the foolish shepherds,” “ the idol shepherds,” or false shepherds, as well as against his people through them. Of these *shepherds* he continues to speak in the *thirteenth* chapter, and breaks out (v. 7,) in the language of the passage we are considering : “ Awake, O sword, against *my* shepherd”—a *subordinate* shepherd ; as is said of Cyrus : “ he is *my* shepherd.” Just as a principal agent says of another, who acts *under* him : “ he is *my* agent.” That the *Seventy* understood by the word rendered in our translation *shepherd*, one of a *class*, namely, “ the foolish shepherds,” is evident from the fact, that they have rendered it in the *plural*, τοὺς ποιμένας μου ; against *my shepherds*. The word rendered *fellow*, in the latter part of the parallelism, they render τὸν πολίτην μου, *my subject* (one of a *class*), *my people*. One definition which Schleusner gives to this Greek word is, *subjectus principis*, the *subject* of a *prince*, or king. This *latter* member of the parallelism has a similar

but a *wider* sense than the former one (in which mention is made of "my shepherd"), including the people of Israel *generally*, as well as the shepherds. There is nothing in the context which leads us to suppose that there is a change of the *subject* here, from the class of persons already mentioned, to *another* person, "the chief Shepherd"—the *Messiah*; but much to the contrary. Much less, does it designate the *Divine nature* of the Messiah,—whatever theory may be formed of his Person.

Something must be said, of the alleged application of this passage by Christ to himself, as though it were *originally spoken* of him. He says (Matt. 26 : 31), "All ye shall be offended because of me this night : for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." But this is not an accurate quotation, either from the text of the Hebrew or of the Septuagint; as any one may see, on a comparison. There is probably an *allusion* to it: but in what way? Quotations are made in the New Testament from the Old, with very great latitude. In Matt. 2 : 15, language is used with much more precision than in the former case, and applied to the child Jesus, in Egypt: he "was there until the death of Herod: *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.*" But by what prophet was it thus spoken of him? The only passage to be found, which is in any way similar to this, is in Hosea 11 : 1: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and

called my son out of Egypt." But this, evidently, is *history*. How, then, could the sacred writer say, "*that it might be fulfilled,*" &c. ? There is no good reason to believe that the passage quoted, had, in its place, a reference to anything but the calling, or bringing of the people of Israel out of Egypt. But the language is much modified, and thus applied to the return of the *child Jesus* from Egypt. So the passage in question is modified, and applied to describe the scene which was presented, when Christ was seized by the Jews, and his disciples fled. Grotius suggests, that this language had passed into a proverb; and that the sense of the passage is something like this: "As it is wont to be said, and as we remember it is somewhere written: When the shepherd is smitten, the sheep are scattered."—(*Kuinoel*.) A passage in Josephus is thought to confirm this opinion (*Antiq. B. 8. 15. 4*). When Ahab waged war against the Syrians, and *Micaiah* was called to prophesy as to its result, he said: "God had showed to him the Israelites running away, and pursued by the Syrians, and dispersed upon the mountains by them, *as are flocks of sheep dispersed when their shepherd is slain.*" To the event above described, Christ evidently refers, in John 16 : 32, without any allusion to Scripture prophesy: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that *ye shall be scattered every one to his own,* and shall leave me alone." Christ is often spoken of in the New Testament and referred to in the Old, as a *shepherd*; and such he was, and is; but that the passage in Zech. 13 : 7, had



any original reference to the Messiah, there is no good reason to believe.

The passage in Ps. 102 : 25–27, is commonly supposed to be addressed to the *Divine nature* of Christ ; particularly, as the language is applied to him by the apostle, in the first chapter to the Hebrews.

It is fair to suppose that this Psalm is what it purports to be ; and there is no good reason to doubt that the writer of the explanatory title in Hebrew, understood its real import ; especially when it is compared with the Psalm itself. This ancient title is, as rendered in our translation, “ A prayer of the *afflicted*, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord ”—Jehovah. Such is the import of the Psalm. It is a prayer in the form of a Psalm, or sacred song, adapted to the condition of a deeply afflicted individual, perhaps one of a class—a whole people—composed by one of their number ; the writer himself feeling the full weight of the grievous burden. Such being the plain import of the Psalm, there is no internal evidence that it originally referred to Christ.

The writer commences with pouring out his complaint before Jehovah, and continues through eleven verses. Then the contrast is presented, between the suppliant and the Being addressed ; and the writer of the Psalm takes comfort in the eternity and mercy of God toward his church, to whom his promises, as he endures forever the *same*, will never fail—(vs. 12, 13). He then speaks (v. 14,) of the delight which God’s people take in everything appertaining to Zion. In

consequence of his interposition in her behalf, even the heathen would be led to fear Jehovah; and he would be glorified—(vs. 15, 16). The writer then goes on to express his confidence that God would regard the prayer of the afflicted, and take favorable notice of their condition; whether understood of an afflicted individual, or of his afflicted people in general—(vs. 17–22). In v. 23, the writer's own depressed condition comes up again. In the very next verse (24), it continues: "I said"—who said? Doubtless the afflicted petitioner. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations." Then follows the passage before us: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." The writer then concludes the Psalm with expressing his confidence, that the children of God's afflicted people would be established in prosperity.

This is what the Psalm purports to be—a *prayer of the afflicted*—the poor, the distressed—to JEHOVAH. Who is this Jehovah? It is the God of Israel—Jehovah of hosts. It is He who was the shepherd of his people in ancient times; He who took care of them, provided for them, ruled over them; "He who was with the church"—the people of Israel—"in the wilderness." It is He who, ever since the first intima-

tions of mercy to man, has been carrying on a gracious administration of affairs toward this world—the same God who was manifested in the flesh, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth ; the same who, according to Christ's oft-repeated declaration, “dwelt in him,” as his Father and his God. HE it is, who “laid the foundation of the earth,” whose “years are throughout all generations,” and “who is God over all, blessed forever.” On account of His own indwelling in “the Son of man,”—for, “in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,”—the apostle, in the first chapter to the Hebrews, truly and properly applies this language, which was originally addressed to Jehovah, to Christ himself ; through whom as mediator, as *the Messiah*, the probationary government of this world is, and has been from the first, administered.

This Psalm, then, was composed by an afflicted individual, as the representative of a *class*, and addressed to Jehovah, who dwelt in the Son of God ; so that this *Son*—using the term in the widest sense as a *proper name*—may be addressed as Jehovah, who “made the worlds.” That the language in question was originally addressed by the first Person of the Trinity to the second Person, possessing “numerically the same” Divine attributes as the first, or those which are “similar or equal” to his, but “distinct” from them ; the Scriptures do not seem to afford a particle of proof.

It is not wise to set ourselves to make out a whole system of divinity from the first verse of Chronicles,—“Adam, Sheth, Enosh,”—nor to claim that we find

*Christ* in every passage of the Old Testament. Such a method of interpretation only serves to cast suspicion and doubt on *those passages* which plainly speak of a Messiah to come. In regard to *this* class of passages, let the true sense be set forth and maintained; and let other passages be understood according to their proper import. "All Scripture is profitable," some in one way, and some in another. Let each part express that meaning which its nature and the circumstances of the case require. Then the Holy Scriptures will be rightly and most easily understood, and most honored, as *the word of God*.

In the *New Testament*, Christ often speaks of the Father, and prays to his Father, *God*: but we are not to understand this as spoken of his (Christ's) *Divine nature*—"all the fullness of the Godhead [or, in his own language, 'the Father,'] that dwelleth in him;" but of him as "the Son of man," or "the Son of God." Otherwise, we should represent such passages to mean, that the Divine nature of the Son prayed to the Divine nature of the Father—one Divine person in the Godhead praying (through the Messiah) to another Divine person in the Godhead. But surely, this is not in accordance with the simplicity of the Scriptures, or with revealed truth itself. Christ, who commonly speaks of himself as "the Son of man," represents this *Son of man* as praying to the Father. The same Person prayed, who died: but the *Divine* nature of Christ did not die. It does not relieve the subject at all, to say

that his Divine and human nature *both* prayed. Not so the Scriptures, or common sense.

Those passages of the Old Testament, then, which speak of the *Son of God*, are *prophetic anticipations* of the Messiah. They refer to what would take place *during* the mediatorial dispensation; not to what transpired in reference to the Logos (or Son of God) *before* that dispensation was introduced. And those passages of the New Testament, in which the Son speaks *of* the Father, or prays *to* him, are to be understood in reference to his *human nature*.

Let us now consider how the three pronouns in question, are used in reference to the *Holy Spirit*, or Spirit of God, in the Scriptures.

It may be remarked, as the result of a careful examination of the subject, that the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the *third* person, in the use of the pronoun *he*; but is never, either by the Father or the Son, addressed in the *second* person, *thou*: at least, we have not been able to find such an instance. By *whom* is he thus designated, in the third person? Is it by God the *Father*, in distinction from the Son and Holy Spirit? It is believed that a clear case of this kind, in which the Father speaks *to* the Spirit, or *of* the Spirit, cannot be found in the Scriptures. Commonly—and so far as we have been able to find, universally—he is spoken of in the third person, by *the Holy Spirit himself*, under the name of Jehovah, Spirit of Jehovah, and the like. It has been said that “*Spirit of God*,” in the Old Testament, often means simply *God himself*.

But is it God the Father, God in Christ, or God the Holy Spirit? Each one of these, according to the Scriptures, is *God himself*. Is it God *unrevealed*—God in the *abstract*? Of such a being, we know nothing.

Who was it that inspired the prophets, and gave them their message to the people to whom they were sent? We are told, that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*.”—(2 Pet. 1 : 21.) Yet this “*moving*” agent, when he delivers his message to the prophet, calls himself “the Spirit of Jehovah,” “Jehovah of hosts,” or simply “Jehovah.” Under this latter name, he gave Isaiah his message to Jacob: “I will pour *my Spirit* upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring”—(44 : 2, 3). So in Zech. 4 : 6: “This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying; Not by might, nor by power, but by *my Spirit*, saith Jehovah of hosts.” Yet He who “moved” the prophet and gave him this message, was “the Holy Ghost.” The meaning is: “but I will do it myself.” So in Ezek. 36 : 25, 26, &c.: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” Who is the Divine agent in the work of sanctification here described, if not the *Holy Spirit*? Throughout the book of Joel, the Holy Spirit, by that prophet, speaks to his people, under the name of Jehovah: “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will

pour out my Spirit upon *all flesh*'—*gentiles* as well as Jews. In other language: "I will put forth those gracious influences, which shall produce the effects in question."—Joel 2 : 28 ; Acts 2 : 17.

It should be observed, that it is not God the *Father*, who inspired the prophet, and who speaks of the out-pouring of the Spirit. Nor can the speaker be God considered as *moral governor simply*, i. e. without reference to this world's probation : for that would be a palpable contradiction ; inasmuch as he is speaking of *men* in reference to *their salvation*. But it is the Spirit of Jehovah, or the *Holy Spirit*, who speaks of himself in the *third* person, by a term designating his peculiar office and agency in the work of redemption, for the very purpose of giving his peculiar work *prominence*, and making the impression upon men that it is done by *his special, gracious interposition* in their behalf : "I will pour out my Spirit"—"I will put forth abundant, gracious, spiritual influences, which shall produce great and glorious results in the kingdom of the Messiah." The figure is taken from the effects of abundance of rain, upon the parched ground in very warm climates—rapid, great, and happy effects. The rain is "*poured out*," to produce these effects. So the *Spirit* is "*poured out*,"—abundant, gracious Divine influences shall be granted, producing the happiest results. It is believed that when the Holy Spirit is mentioned—mentioned as he is, in the *third* person—reference is always had to his *peculiar* office and agency—to those Divine operations which the Scrip-

tures ascribe to God, in his *gracious* dispensations toward men.

This practice of speaking of one's self in the *third* person, for the purpose of giving prominence and effect to a particular *office* or *relation*, is a very common thing; and in ordinary cases, well understood. A father, wishing to make a happy and an abiding impression upon his son, by means of the *relation* between them, says to him: "Think of the instructions of your anxious *father*, whenever you are exposed to temptation; and be sure that your correct deportment will always give *him* great pleasure." So a dying mother, to her wayward son: "Remember this last advice of your *mother*, when *she* is gone." In like manner, the presiding officer in a public meeting, speaks of himself in the *third* person: "The Chair," or "the Moderator"—thus, in a modest and dignified manner, giving prominence and effect to his *office* and its *relation* to the assembly. The same method is used in the following sentence: "The *President* of the *United States* will never give *his* sanction to such a measure; it would be a disgrace to *him*, and to the nation." In like manner, the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, speaks of himself in the third person—*after the manner of men*—with reference to his peculiar office, and to that *gracious* agency which he exerts in various ways, favoring, defending, and extending the Messiah's kingdom.

A method of speaking similar to that which has been dwelt upon, is common in the Scriptures, on *ordinary* occasions. The Psalmist says: "they seek *my* soul,



to destroy *it* ;” not his soul in distinction from his body ; but simply “ *me*,” or my life, “ to destroy it.” “ My *soul* is among lions ;” “ *I* am among lions”—powerful *enemies* who seek to tear me in pieces. “ My *soul* cleaveth unto the dust ;” I myself, *body* as well as soul. Similar to these, is Hag. 2 : 5 : “ According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so *my Spirit* remaineth among you ;” so *I* remain among you. Isa. 48 : 16, is often named (e. g. by *Watson* and others) as containing “ the whole doctrine of the Trinity :” “ And now *Jehovah* (the Father) and *his Spirit* (the Holy Ghost) hath sent *me* (the Messiah).” On the word rendered *Spirit*, Prof. Knapp remarks.\* that “ it means here, as it always does when used by the prophets in this connection, the *direct, immediate command* of God. To say, then, *the Lord AND HIS SPIRIT hath sent me*, is the same as to say, the Lord hath sent me by a *direct, immediate command*.” Or, *Jehovah*, even his Spirit, i. e. *Jehovah himself* hath sent me. But the *interpretation*, on which the Professor comments, alters the *common theory* materially. In this, the Father and the Son send the Spirit ; but in that, the Father and the Spirit send the Son. But if “ *me*,” in this passage, means the *Messiah*, then it does not mean the *Divine nature*—“ all the fullness of the Godhead,” that “ dwelt” in the Messiah.

The result of the argument is this : The Son of man,

\* Theology, p. 133.

or the Son of God *in time*—not the Logos in eternity—addresses the Father directly, and the Father him—directly or prophetically; and the Son speaks of the Holy Spirit in the third person, *he*; but never addresses the Spirit in the second person, *thou*. And, generally, when God is represented as speaking, he speaks in the first or third person, in the singular or plural number, after the manner of men; but one Person in the nature of the Godhead, is not represented as addressing *another* Person in the nature of the Godhead.

What, then, is the amount of the traditionary statement we have been considering, relative to the use of the personal pronouns, *I, Thou, He*? From a careful examination it would seem, that it has no force, and no application to the case; *these pronouns not being employed by the different Persons of the Trinity among themselves*. But the manner in which they are used, very naturally and happily accords with the Biblical view of the Trinity, as set forth on the preceding pages.

From what has been advanced on the general subject, it is evident that this distinction of three Persons, *in the nature of the Godhead itself*, as presented in the common theory of the Trinity, is not actually taught in the Scriptures. If so, WHAT IS GAINED by insisting upon it as an article of faith? The supreme Divinity of the Son and Spirit—the great thing aimed at in that theory—is as fully taught without it as with it. Nay, the *supreme* Divinity of each of these is much more

clearly and fully taught in the simple Trinity of the Scriptures than in the common theory. This theory, as we have seen, *virtually* teaches the derivation of the second and third Persons, and their inferiority to the first—the Father; who is represented as “the *fountain* of the Deity,” who “begets” the second Person, and from whom or from both, the third “proceeds.” This *inferiority of nature*—a nature “begotten” or “proceeding”—is *virtually* contained in that theory; notwithstanding the entire equality of the three Persons, “in essence and attributes,” is affirmed. The assertion of such equality, though made with the utmost sincerity, is an unavailing effort to reconcile what appears to be intrinsically absurd, what, indeed, is *irreconcilable* with the plain teachings of the Bible.

What, then, is *gained* by this scholastic philosophy? “If God, only in his relations to us and the creation around us, *God as developed by his attributes*, and *not as he is in himself* or considered in respect to his *internal essence*, be revealed to us in the Bible, *why not be content with what the Scriptures have taught*, without forcing sentiments upon the sacred writers which have been excogitated only by metaphysicians of later days?”\*

But some are not content with this. They must have something beside to help sustain the Scriptures. They maintain that the common theory is *necessary* to defend the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity; to *drive*

\* Stuart on Heb. v. 2, p. 315.

*out and keep out heresy.* This was the grand reason for adopting it at first, and the one often assigned for holding on to it still; and many do hold on to it, as though it were *articulus vel stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*—the very palladium of the Christian church.

Bishop Watson says: "In fact, it was by the adoption of the two great theological terms *ὁμοούσιος* and *ὑπόστασις* [*homogeneous* and *person*, about the meaning of which there was much contention], that the church reared up impregnable barriers against the two leading heresies, into which almost every modification of error, as to the person of Christ, may be resolved."\* But they did a great deal more, in this way, by excommunicating and burning heretics.

Dr. Woods also says: "Substance is a *metaphysical term*, [exactly so], originally introduced into the Trinitarian creed, and still employed, *to confront Arianism.*" The Doctor is right about it, it is even so. But it is far better "to confront Arianism," Socinianism, and any other theological *ism* that is wrong, with the simple *word of God*. That word is far more intelligible to the common mind—to *any human mind*—more consistent with itself and with common sense, and possesses infinitely higher authority in matters of faith.

*John Marck*, an eminent Protestant divine, who was born in Friezland in 1655, and died in 1731, published a book entitled the *Marrow of Christian Theology*. It is a condensation of his voluminous theological sys-

\* Theol. Instit. p. 162.

tem, (a standard work of great authority in the university at Leyden), and a work of uncommon merit—*multum in parvo*. In his *Medulla*, remarking on the subject of the Trinity, the author says, among other things, that “the words *Person* and *Trinity* are necessary, in the *present state of the church*, TO EXCLUDE HERESY ; although the words themselves are not explicitly found in Scripture ; for heretics use even Scripture terms in a perverted sense. And they manage very badly who yield so much to them on account of their aversion to these distinctions, as not to speak at all concerning the *mystery of the Father, Son and Spirit*.”\*

It is confessed then, and insisted, that the terms *Person* and *Trinity* are *necessary*—that they cannot be dispensed with—that the church of God is unsafe and his revelation insufficient, without the help and protection of these uninspired auxiliaries. Not only are these terms carefully and confidently affirmed to be necessary, but the need is *explained* as well as affirmed. And why this pressing need?—what the *Divine* exigency that can and must be relieved by these human inventions ?

They were not—so it seems—necessary to be given by inspiration of God ; for such a necessity would im-

\* “*Nomina Persona et Trinitatis*, in præsentî statu Ecclesiæ, ad arcendam hæresin, sunt necessaria, etiamsi explicite in Scriptura non legantur : quia sensu detorto nominibus Scripturæ utuntur etiam hæretici. Et male agunt omnino, qui tantum his ex odio terminorum cedunt, ut nonnisi de *Mysterio Patris, Filii et Spiritus* loquantur.” Vide “*Johannis Marchii* CHRISTIANÆ THEOLOGIÆ MEDULLA *didactico-elenctica*. Editio tertia AMSTELÆDAMI, anno M, DCC, V.” p. 65.

ply defect and oversight in what is so given. They were not necessary for the understanding of revealed truth; for such necessity would involve the absurd supposition of a revelation *not revealed*. They were not necessary, for the wise or the unwise, till centuries after the efficacious diffusion of Christian light among civilized and barbarous nations. For all these objects, as is virtually and necessarily admitted, they were *unnecessary and superfluous*; but only and absolutely necessary, as it would seem, for a certain brief exigency, viz., "*the present state of the church*"—more than a century and a half now gone by; but *then*, indispensable to be incorporated in creeds and covenants as tests of faith and terms of fellowship, for the sole and blessed purpose of "*excluding heresy!*" A precious confession this of the modern "John whose surname was Marck!"

But it would be wrong to consider him as the exclusive owner of so precious a reason. It was the property not only of this eminent divine, whose authority was so great in and long after his own day, but of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors in the chair of theology, to be used, jointly and severally, by all who would compel subscription and adhesion to scholastic creeds, under penalty of noncommunion and excommunication; and who then turn round and exclaim, "*So the Church has always understood the subject!*"

The great object of the *common theory* of the Trinity, then, is, and has been from the first, to exclude heresy from the Church. But *whence came* this theory?

*Where did it originate ?* For we do not find it in the Bible.

We do not design to speak, here, of the assumption that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed, known, and understood from the remotest antiquity, and hence received throughout the whole heathen world ; for this topic may be more appropriately introduced in a subsequent chapter. But we wish here to present the statement of one or two authors, of known reputation and ability,—*who hold the common theory*,—respecting “the Platonic Trinity.” Dr. George Hill says of it : “I do not mean the Trinity held by Plato himself ; for, although it has been said that this philosopher *anticipated the revelation of three Persons in the God-head*, and that *his philosophy prepared the world to receive this incomprehensible truth ; yet*” (more briefly), the passages referred to are too few and obscure to draw this conclusion from them. “It has been said that the trinity of persons in the Deity was a *secret doctrine* of Plato, . . . . not published to the world till the second or third century of the Christian era, when the Platonic school, following out the sublime views of the Divine nature given by their master, *which in some points corresponded to the Christian revelation*, and themselves enlightened by an acquaintance with the gospel, . . . . brought forward a scheme very much resembling the Trinity ;” i. e. the common theory of the Trinity.

“The three principles in the Deity are, το αγαθόν, goodness, νοῦς, intelligence, ψυχὴ, vitality. These

three, strictly speaking, are more one, than anything in nature, of which unity may be predicated. No one of them can be supposed without the other two. The second and third being, the first is necessarily supposed; and the first being, the second and third must come forth. All the three were included by the Platonists in the *Divine nature*, the *το θεϊον*; a notion implying the same equality which the Christian Fathers maintained.”\*

Prof. Knapp also, after speaking of the *learned Jews* who lived beyond the bounds of Palestine, as having imbibed many of the principles of the philosophy prevailing where they resided, and *incorporated them into their religious system*, and in a similar manner of the Grecian Jews who had become acquainted with the Christian doctrine, thus remarks: “From the foregoing statements, we arrive at the following conclusions, viz.: It cannot be denied that many of the ancient heathen philosophers (e. g., the *Platonists*) believed in a Trinity in the Divine nature; and that they were led to entertain that belief by the principles of the *theory of emanation*, which they had first adopted. From this source, many learned Jews, who lived beyond the bounds of Palestine, drew their opinions—e. g., the Alexandrine Jews, Philo, and the Cabbalists. These Grecian Jews did not, however, simply adopt the pure ideas of Plato, which were variously represented, even by the New Platonists, but *they mixed and incorpor-*

\* Lects. in Divin. pp. 380–1. Consult Bp. Horsley’s 13th Letter to Dr. Priestly; and Cudworth’s *Intellectual System*.



*ated them with their own national opinions and their own religious principles, and thus endeavored to reconcile Platonism with the language and doctrines of the Bible. That a Trinity, in this sense, was known and professed by philosophers and Jews who were not Christians, is admitted."* After speaking of the difference between the two theories, Prof. Knapp adds: "But although the Platonic trinity differs thus widely from the scriptural doctrine, and also from the established *theory of the church*, it is yet possible that *the scholastic and technical language in use* on this subject, was *originally borrowed by Christians from the Platonic theology.*"\*

From a careful examination of the subject, then, it is not only "possible," but very evident, that "the scholastic and technical language" of the common theory of the Trinity, "was originally borrowed by Christians from the Platonic theology;" and that the distinctions in the nature of the Godhead, with "the same equality which the Christian fathers maintained," were derived from the same source, and not originally from the Scriptures. This theory was a *scion* from Platonism, engrafted upon Christianity. It was incorporated with the latter system by the early fathers, as it had before been with Judaism by the learned Jews. Having been thus adopted and incorporated into the system, it was, according to the custom then prevalent of holding philosophy in the highest estimation, regarded

\* Theology, pp. 146-7.

as of the very first importance to Christianity itself. That theory did, indeed, afford an opportunity of manifesting decided and permanent *opposition* to the errors of Arius, and others like him; but such opposition could have been manifested much better in another way—taking for a foundation THE WORD OF GOD ITSELF, and resting the *whole* argument on that. “Here is firm footing; here is solid rock.” Nothing of any value has been gained by that philosophical theory. After a thorough experiment of fifteen or sixteen hundred years, it has been found not to answer the purpose for which it was introduced, and has ever since been maintained, viz.: “to confront Arianism,” and “to exclude heresy” *from the Christian church*. This work, it cannot do.

But if nothing is gained, something is *lost* by this theory. It throws the Scriptures too much into the shade. It is a cloud thrust between us and the sun, concealing him from our view and shutting out the light of heaven. It indicates conscious weakness—a want of *entire* confidence in the word of God—a secret fear that this word is not sufficient to sustain its plain teachings, without the aid of scholastic philosophy. It has made skeptics and infidels without number. Its fruits are uncharitableness, self-righteousness, hatred, variance, strife and divisions among brethren; bigotry, superstition, arrogance, domineering and persecution in the church of God. A portion of its history is written in the ashes and with the blood of martyrs.

The best way to rebut error in *human philosophy*,

is, to expose its fallacy in the light of *true* philosophy. The best way to meet error in *revealed religion*, is,—not, to confront it with that philosophy which knows nothing about it ; but with *the word of God*. If we wish for evidence in regard to the question, whether Christ the Logos is really God, let us not go to systems of human philosophy ; but rather to the oracles of God, and hear Jehovah, by an inspired apostle, declare respecting the Messiah, that “in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily ;” that “he is God over all ;” that “this is the true God and eternal life ;” and if these and other similar declarations do not settle the question, when “*one* plain declaration of God is as good as a hundred ;” it will be in vain for human philosophy to undertake to make up any deficiency of evidence in the case, by resorting to distinctions or distinct Persons in the nature of God himself. Yet some appear to think, and strongly to feel, that if these distinctions are not insisted upon and maintained, then the plain Scripture doctrine of the supreme Divinity of the Son and Spirit, must fall to the ground : there is no hope for it. But how did the *writers of the New Testament* maintain the real Godhead of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit ? Was it not by the simple teachings of the Holy Spirit himself ? They did not deem it necessary to add to his explicit testimony, any philosophizings of their own, as *additional* evidence, NECESSARY to explain, reconcile, or defend the truth which God had taught. When the apostle Paul wrote to Christians living in a country

where philosophy was idolized, and the gospel generally was regarded as foolishness, he did not consider it necessary, out of his own *philosophizing*, to “rear up impregnable barriers against heresy.” He depended on “the preaching of the cross;” which “is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us *who are saved*, it is the power of God.” He says the same in regard to his *preaching*: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you *the testimony of God*.” How it would sound, to hear a preacher, after taking this passage for his text, or those other words of the same apostle,—“which things also we speak, not in *the words which man’s wisdom teacheth*, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,”—to hear him proceed to give us, as “the most generic Orthodox statement of the Trinity,—*three predicates of the one subject, God* ;” and then, “embodying and setting forth the entire doctrine,” represented as “three distinct and eternal subsistences in the Godhead”—“in the Divine nature itself;” “God, in *his own eternal nature*, as three in one and one in three”—“three hypostases united in one essence, substance, or substratum?” When he had finished a discourse of this character, *how much wiser* would his plain, common-sense hearers be, for all they had heard from him on this subject? Would they not be likely to say, that the preacher had *reversed* the maxim of the apostle, and spoken to them, not “in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, but in the words which *man’s wisdom* teacheth?” And if

we should find this very account of the matter gravely set forth in an *instrument*, designed to convict a Christian brother of "heresy" in regard to the Bible doctrine of the Trinity,—a work elaborately done by its authors, but without quoting, in proof of their position, *a single passage of Holy Writ*,—"the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,"—but simply "the doctrine as we are accustomed to confess it"—in the language of the schools—"the words which man's wisdom teacheth;" and all this declared to be solemnly "regarded as *absolutely essential* to any real confession of the doctrine in question;"—should we, after hearing such a statement, be likely to think *the spirit* of the above maxim of the apostle pervaded the minds of the authors, suggested their language, and guided the pen that filled out that instrument? Surely, *the Scriptures are thrown quite into the shade*, while an antiquated SCHOLASTIC THEORY stands out before us, like a gigantic statue of some ancient divinity, resting upon a tall pedestal.

However useful true philosophy may be,—and it *has* important uses when properly applied, and when not properly applied it is not true philosophizing,—yet the testimony of God can stand without our philosophy, or it cannot stand at all. Nay; if you get into your philosophy that which seems plainly contrary to common sense; if you maintain as an essential ingredient of Divine truth, that from which the mind of man, *apart* from his depravity, instinctively revolts; many persons will reject the intermingled *truth itself*,—even the

whole system,—which that philosophy was intended to illustrate and confirm : for they will consider both as resting on the same foundation ; and your example will stimulate them to confront *your* philosophy with that which seems to them more consistent with the nature of the subject and with common sense. Especially, if they have a strong aversion to the truth *as revealed*, and are disgusted with the manner in which it is presented, will they take occasion to reject it, on the ground of that absurd philosophy which was honestly intended for its maintenance and defense? whether that philosophy be embodied in “the emanation diction of the Nicene Council and the dialectic subtilty which was called into being by the vagaries of Arius,”\* and transmitted to us through the dark ages ; or whether devised at a later period. If all those who have rejected the common *theory* of the Trinity, had receded *just far enough* from it to have stopped *on the line of Scripture truth*, instead of going as far the other side of it, and most of them very much farther still,—so far, as to leave much of that truth out of sight,—they might have *stood firmly* “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” But Trinitarians, on the one hand, have been afraid of yielding too much, in their philosophy of certain doctrines, lest they should give their opponents the advantage ; and Anti-trinitarians, on the other hand, have been afraid of acknowledging too

\* Bib. Repos., Ap. 1835, pp. 315.

much, lest they should be drawn into admissions which would seem to support a theory that they consider absurd. In this particular, *both* parties are in the wrong. Let both of them come upon *simple Biblical ground*, and they are safe from the assaults of error, under the broad shield of Divine truth. That simple *truth* is the all-important thing to be preserved. This can be well done, only on the authority of God. His truth can stand *on the basis of his own testimony*. It does not need the support of Platonic, New Platonic or Nicene philosophy, or dialectic subtilties of any kind; however modified by the taste and fashion of the age. False philosophy thrown around the truth of God, serves only to conceal and disfigure it and mar its symmetry and beauty. As well might we pile up soft clay against a large, stately, comely edifice of granite, to support and ornament the building, as to conceal and disfigure the great truths of the gospel with that scholastic philosophy which has long been an appendage to those truths. Its introduction at first, though according to the custom of that age, indicated a want of *entire confidence* in the word of God, as being of itself sufficient evidence in the case; and it has brought centuries of trouble with it—trouble, which yet has not an end. And it is to be expected that *God will permit this trouble to vex his people, till they learn to trust more implicitly in his written word, and less in their own philosophical theories*.

But *why* cannot a Biblical Trinity as it came down from heaven, stand, on the basis of God's word alone;

without always having its beauty marred and its form concealed or disfigured, by the well-meant yet mistaken inventions of men? And why cannot *all* the glorious truths which develop the great scheme of redemption—that magnificent temple planned in heaven, built by God himself and founded upon a rock—stand, amid the puny attacks of weak and sinful man, without the powerless support of “philosophy falsely so called?” When will all the friends of the Bible *practically* believe, that revealed truth can stand on its own proper basis, THE VERACITY OF GOD, without the aid of any of the conflicting philosophies—ancient or modern—which jostle one Bible truth this way and another that, to make room for themselves?



### CHAPTER III.

#### ADDITIONAL PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE EXAMINED.

ON some private dwellings, there is an eminence, called *The Observatory* ; the windows of which are set with glass of various colors, designed to imitate the colors of the rainbow. Any one who takes his position in such an *Observatory* will see external objects through the various *media* around him,—not as they appear when viewed through clear glass, or with the naked eye, but—of a color corresponding to that of the *medium* through which they are seen. If he looks at them through the lightly or thinly colored glass,—the yellow or the violet,—they will indeed be *tinged* with yellow or with violet ; but he can still satisfy himself what their real color is. But if he looks at them through the *darkest* media,—the deep red or the indigo,—every object appears to be of one and the same deep color. All the dwellings within the compass of his vision,—whether red, yellow, stone, slate, or white,—the foliage of the trees, and the rich green carpet which the God of nature has spread over the broad meadows

and the distant hills, *all* are a deep red, or the darkest indigo.

So it is with objects of thought, when they are viewed through a false medium. The truth is discolored and perhaps distorted by it, and we do not see it as it is. If we look at the *Scriptures* through the medium of prejudice or of a false philosophy, instead of doing so with the naked eye of common sense and in the clear light which revelation *generally* sheds upon any subject which is under examination, we shall not discern their true meaning; but they will be tinged or deeply colored by the *medium* through which they are seen.

The preceding illustration has an important bearing upon the object of this chapter; which is, an examination, more or less extended, of additional passages of Scripture appertaining to the general subject we are considering. Among those passages which are claimed as teaching or implying a distinction of Persons in the *nature* of God, are a few verses at the beginning of the Gospel by John.

Before entering directly upon an examination of this passage, it may be well to introduce a remark of Prof. Knapp, of Halle, on the "hypotheses of theologians" concerning *the imputation of Adam's sin*; as it is appropriate to the subject in hand. He says: "The greatest difficulties with respect to this doctrine have arisen from the fact, that many have treated what is said by Paul in the fifth of Romans—a passage wholly popular, and anything but formally exact and didactic—in a learned and philosophical manner, and have

defined terms used by him in a loose and popular way, by logical and scholastic distinctions.”\*

Now, it will doubtless be granted on all hands, that if *any* writer of the New Testament treats his subject “in a learned and philosophical manner,” it is the apostle Paul; and that the apostle John, above *all* these writers, uses language “in a loose and popular way,” and not “in a learned and philosophical manner,” with “logical and scholastic distinctions,” or “formal exactness.” There is often some great subject which fills his mind, that he presents over and over again, either in several different forms of expression or in nearly the same form, *to explain or impress the general truth*. Thus in John 1 : 13, those who become the sons of God, the writer says, “were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Here the same truth is presented in a different form, *four* times; three times negatively, and one positively. So in the *seventh* verse: “And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ.” Here the same truth is stated three times. The same thing is done in chapter 17 : 8, 9, 12, and many other places. In 1 John 1 : 1–3, the same varied form of expression is used, repeating *substantially* the same important truth several times; and stating *other* truths two or three times each, before the end of the sentence: “That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen with our*

\* Theology, p. 274.

*eyes*, which we have *looked upon*, and our hands have *handled*, of the Word of life ; (for the life was *manifested*, and we have *seen* it, and *bear witness*, and *show* unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was *manifested* unto us) ; that which we have *seen* and *heard*, *declare* we unto you.” Here the fact of this apostle’s having, in the same or in different ways, *come to the knowledge* of what he declares, is mentioned *seven* times ; the *manifestation* of it, *twice* ; and his *making it known* to them, *three times*—all in the same sentence. The same thing is done in chapter 2 : 11, and 3 : 9. So in Rev. 22 : 13, the same writer says : “ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”—the same thought, presented in three sets of terms.

It is, then, according to the genius of this writer, to *repeat* an important truth which he would express and enforce upon the minds of others, in similar or in very different language, *several times* ; but “ in a loose and popular way,” without “ logical or scholastic distinctions.” This is true, far beyond the proper limits of Hebrew parallelism. Let us examine and see if the same thing is not manifest, in a few verses at the beginning of his Gospel.

“ In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that was made. . In him was life ; and the life was the light of men. And the Logos was made flesh and

dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

The point now to be considered is ; Whether the great object of the sacred writer here, is not, to teach and maintain the *Supreme Divinity* of the Logos, considered as the REVEALER of the Godhead in the works of creation, providence, and redemption ; without *any reference* to the distinction of *three Persons in the nature of God himself*, as since maintained. In other words ; whether his object is not to teach us that HE who makes these revelations of the Godhead, is *not* a derived or subordinate divinity, like some gods (e. g. the *Æons*) of the heathen philosophers of that day, nor a Divine attribute ; but *the true God himself*, denominated the Logos, *with reference to these manifestations*. So God is denominated *Jehovah* with reference to his *self-existence* ; and *Lord* or *King*, with reference to his *supreme dominion* ; and *Creator, Father, Shepherd*, and the like, with reference to some particular *aspect* or *relation* of the Supreme Being, *on account of which* the appropriate name in each case is applied to him. It is no less true that he is the *Supreme God*, whether designated by *one* or *another* of these names ; whether *occasionally* or *generally*, *temporarily* or *permanently*, so designated. We are to look through the name—the *Shekinah*—the *manifestation in the flesh*, up to HIM who thus manifests himself. HE is the Logos.

If these things are so, then the sacred writer of the

passage before us asserts that the *Logos is the true God*, according to his frequent manner of stating many truths, *four times*, in somewhat varied forms of expression : “ The Logos existed at the beginning of all things—in eternity ; and the Logos was of one and the same nature with God ; I mean, the Logos was the true God himself. This Logos was not a Divine attribute, nor a derived being, but was eternally one and the same with the true God himself.” More briefly, “ The Logos—the Revealer of the Godhead—existed before the creation began, and was eternally one and the same with the true God.” In illustration of his meaning, the writer goes on to say, here and elsewhere : “ All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that was made. He was the living God, the light of the world, the author and communicator of Divine and saving knowledge to men. This Logos became incarnate ; and as the Shekinah—the Son of God on earth—the only beloved of the Father—he dwelt among us, abounding in grace and truth suited to the wants of men.

The only real difficulty in this passage, appertains to the preposition *μετ*—*with*. And why should any stumble at a *particle*, when we have the clear light of revelation shining upon our path ? It is a connecting word, used with very great latitude,—as mentioned in the first chapter of this work,—the meaning of which is often determined entirely by the connection in which it stands, or by the general nature of the subject *introduced*, if not fully stated. The meaning of this prepo-

sition when applied to *men*, may differ, in important respects, from its meaning when applied to God ; as do a multitude of other words. Shall we, then, fix on some general, scholastic, or metaphysical meaning of this word, for the true sense ; or on one which gives a metaphysical sense *to the phrase* ; as though the apostle John had been a disciple of Plato, or been trained in some modern school of metaphysics ? The light which the Scriptures shed upon the general subject,—the *being*, and the *attributes* and *relations* of the true God,—must be our main guide. It would be hardly fair to carry back the “logical and scholastic distinctions” of the present day, or those of the Nicene or Athanasian fathers, and apply them to explain the simple, artless writings of the beloved disciple John. Such metaphysical speculations would have been of little service to his plain, unlettered, common-sense readers or hearers ; and it is *somewhat* doubtful, to say the least, whether they contribute much to the edification of the church, in faith and in holiness, at the present day.

It is here suggested, with very great deference, whether the sense already given of the passage before us, as teaching the *Supreme DIVINITY of the Logos*—the true God revealing himself,—does not *exhaust its meaning*, and *express its ultimate design and its whole bearing* ; without supposing it to teach *any distinctions or distinct Persons at all, in the nature of the Godhead itself*,—that is, “physically or metaphysically considered,”—but only *a different mani-*

*festation of the one God*, suited to the exigencies of the case.

What *evidence* is there that the declaration, "the Logos was with God," was understood by any of the early Christians not imbued with the Platonic or New Platonic philosophy, to mean, or that it does in fact mean, with him *socially*—with him in *any* proper sense in which one "distinct person," or one "distinct and competent moral agent," may be said to be with another—living, consulting, deliberating, and covenanting with him? Does the Greek preposition here (*πρὸς*) necessarily or properly teach this, in reference to the true God? Such is, indeed, the view which the passage presents when seen through the indigo-medium of *Platonic* or *Nicene philosophy*; but is it so when viewed by *common sense*, in the light of the revealed character of God? If you assume that it does, at the outset of the investigation, you assume the very point in debate; and the argument begs the question. But this cannot be assumed, while the question is, *What does the phrase*, "the Logos was with God," *mean*?

• Does the use of this preposition (*πρὸς*—with) in the Greek or English classics, and in reference to *men* simply, decide what it means in the present case, in reference to the *true God*? Can it be supposed that a doctrine which is *really* of so much importance as is claimed for that of "three Persons in the *nature* of God," furnishing "infinitely blessed society in the Divine mind," is left to depend very much, or *at all*, upon the use of a *preposition*, whose meaning is often



determined entirely by the nature of the subject and the connection in which it is found ?

Here are two cases, distinct and unlike in their nature. One is that of a *man* being or living *with* another *man*. The meaning of this is obvious ; for we know there *are* two such men : it is a thing well understood. But when, in the other case, we come to apply this human language to the *infinite God*, it becomes a very different thing. We are met with the Scripture doctrine of the **UNITY** of *God*. The oft-repeated declaration, "*Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is ONE JEHOVAH!*" stands on the sacred page just as it always has done. It is not expunged, recalled, or explained to mean "three Persons in the nature of God." We are often told; indeed, that the Divine unity is taught in Scripture, not in opposition to a Trinity in the nature of the Godhead, but in opposition to idols. But this, so far as appears, is simple assumption. We are told, on good authority, "that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is *none other God but one.*" We are not to suppose the declaration of the Divine unity to be made simply in opposition to *dumb idols*, but to everything which the *plain common sense* of men regards as more than "*one God*;" whether dumb idols, or "three distinct and competent moral agents" supposed to be united in one substratum, and furnishing "infinitely blessed society in God," or whatever *else* amounts to the same thing. Christ himself taught the same doctrine : "*Hear, O Israel ; The Lord our God is one Lord.*"—Mark 12 :

29. This was a point well established, and *settled* in the Scriptures, if *anything* can be so regarded. The beloved disciple John should be expected to teach nothing contrary to it, or inconsistent with it. Especially, in so important a matter as that presented in the common theory of the Trinity, relative to the nature or mode of the Divine existence, it seems altogether natural and reasonable to expect that it would not be left to depend mainly on the meaning of the *preposition* in this passage, and on a few other passages of *difficult* if not doubtful interpretation. It has been soberly asked, Why did not Christ *deny* the truth of the common theory, if it is not well founded? He did not undertake to deny, or name, all the erroneous views of Divine truth which have been entertained from that day to the present. He and his apostles taught *great cardinal doctrines*, which are to be our guide on particular and difficult points, and in opposition to which nothing should be received as *Divine truth* on the *authority* of human interpretation.\*

\* At this point in our preparation for the press, and the *very day* that the first chapter was sent to the printer, our attention was directed to an Article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January, 1850, on the passage before us, by that accomplished scholar, Prof. Stuart—the *Corypheus* of Biblical literature in our country, and now a distinguished veteran in the cause; an Article which we rejoice in the opportunity of perusing at this stage of our progress. Hence, our remarks on some points may be a little extended, and there may be some *repetition* of thoughts just before expressed. We are gratified to see that the venerable Professor's mind, though in its crumbling temement, is so clear, so vigorous, so active,—even as it was in the days of his earlier publications,—and withal, so tender and devout. May he yet be spared, if

When we find a word, like this Greek or English *preposition*, sometimes used in application to men with reference to *society*,—much oftener in *English* than in Greek,—we should inquire how it can be applied to *God*, consistently with what is elsewhere *plainly taught* respecting him; remembering that he is not “such an one as ourselves.” In interpreting such language, having reference to the “one Jehovah,” it is evident that it should not be understood in a *literal* or a *quasi-literal* sense, as when one *man* is said to be *with* another; any more than the language which has been understood to teach “eternal generation,” “eternal procession,” or “transubstantiation;” or that which represents God as *hearkening, hearing*, and keeping a *memorandum-book*, in order to aid his recollections of the good conduct of men.—(Mal. 3: 16.) It must, then, be understood in a *modified* sense, and some *other* interpretation must be given to the *preposition* in this case, than that which indicates two Persons, with the attributes of two distinct and competent moral agents, supposed to be united in one *substratum*, in order to avoid, as much as possible, the untenable position of acknowledging more Gods than one.

With respect to the meaning of the phrase in question, Prof. Stuart remarks that “the word *πρὸς*—*with*, designates, in its primary and literal sense, a *space-relation*, viz. the *proximity* of one thing to an-

it please God, to accomplish still more for the cause of sacred learning and truth, before he has occasion to utter, with his latest breath, the petition, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

other. It may also have a kindred secondary and tropical sense ; in which case it means *in respect to, as to, in reference to, according to, on account of,* and the like. But plainly none of these or the like tropical senses fit the passage before us.”\*

It would surely not be very modest in us to set up a claim to an acquaintance with the proper use and meaning of this Greek preposition, superior to that of the learned and venerable Professor and teacher, at whose feet we have delighted to sit, and should rejoice *again* to sit, and learn. No such claim at all is preferred ; nor, *if* preferred, would it be true. But may we not be permitted to *inquire* whether the *conclusion* to which this distinguished Professor has arrived, at the close of the above paragraph, is *sound* ? The principle on which we had formed a *different* judgment in the case, and which we had written down above, before seeing his article, is substantially the same with that which he has given on p. 36. In reference to the meaning of such language applied to God, as “ *laughing at the attempts of his enemies,*” and “ *even loving and hating,*” he remarks, “ *our exegetical guide, in all such cases, is the nature and perfections of God.*” To this we fully assent. And this is the light by which we hope to be guided in these very inquiries—THE REVEALED NATURE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that, if we are *really* and *truly* guided by this light, without ever substituting for

\* Bibliotheca Sacra; Jan., 1850 ; pp. 31-2.

it the mysterious dimness of that dark-lantern—*scholastic philosophy*,—we shall come to the correct result ?

As Prof. Stuart plainly shows, the preposition here cannot with any propriety be understood “in its primary and literal sense,” but must be understood “in a *modified* sense.” If so, *how much* must that sense be modified to “fit the passage before us ?” Evidently, just so much as our chosen “exegetical guide” shall plainly indicate. Is it *quite clear* that this Greek preposition, rendered *with*, is not, in this passage, used in the “secondary and tropical sense” which he has expressed by the terms “*in respect to, as to, in reference to ?*” Is it not evident that the preposition is here used *adverbially*, in the sense of *the noun which follows it ?*

Liddell and Scott, in their Greek and English Lexicon,—a learned and able work,—give to this preposition, as *classic* usage, the sense of *in reference to, in respect to* : e. g. “*πρὸς τὸν λόγον, in reference to the matter.*”—*Plat. Symp.* 199 B., etc. Donnegan does the same thing. And in Heb. 1 : 7, we find, *καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις λέγει* ; which Prof. Stuart, in his Commentary, (v. 2, p. 55), renders “Moreover, *with respect to* the angels it is said,” &c. Should it be claimed that there is some difference in the use of the preposition in this passage and in the first verse of John, the reply is, *how is that ascertained ?* Is it not by an *examination* of the passages themselves ? But if such examination, *in the light of the general sub-*

*ject*—"our exegetical guide,"—requires us to give to the preposition in the passage before us the sense which has already been expressed, why not act on the same general principle by which we are guided elsewhere, and give it here that sense which the nature of the subject requires? The two joint lexicographers above mentioned, and the American editor, Prof. Drisler, say also, that this preposition in the accusative is often merely *periphrastic*, and used *adverbially*; "*as, πρὸς βίαν, πρὸς ἀνάγκην, by force, forcibly; πρὸς φιλίαν, in a friendly way.*" Schleusner likewise gives two examples from the writings of *Sophocles*, in which this preposition, with the noun following it, is used in the same manner; *πρὸς καιρόν, seasonably, πρὸς ὀργήν, angrily—spitefully.* These are given only as *examples* of its periphrastic or adverbial use.

It seems, then, that in accordance with classic usage, this preposition in the passage under examination may be periphrastic, or used adverbially *in the sense of the noun following it*: "The Logos existed, or was existing, *in respect to the Divine nature itself—divinely, i. e. in the condition of God—as very God,*" (but as yet unrevealed,) which will presently be further considered. There is one other passage at least, in the New Testament, where this preposition with the noun following it, is used in the same way, and it is so rendered in the *margin* of our Bibles. James 4:5: "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to *envy*;" *πρὸς φθονόν, enviously*, in the margin. This use of the

preposition, therefore, is by no means singular. It is so used in classic authors, and in the New Testament.

Next to this use of the preposition, we resort to the teachings of our common "exegetical guide:" what says *that*, in regard to the meaning of the passage before us? "Hear, O Israel; Jehovah our God is *one* Jehovah! There is none other God but one."

Now, suppose this Greek preposition (*προς*) to be found used in application to *some man*, who is spoken of under several names, as General, Governor, Judge—names of *office* at some time, but by common usage become *proper* names, used on *all* occasions (and in accordance with the same human usage, *Jehovah* was so called, denoting his *self-existence*, but afterward often used simply as a *proper name*, without any special reference to that idea,—and so the *Logos*, to denote *God revealing himself*); suppose this preposition to be found in a connection where the *nature of the subject* plainly shows the sense to be, *in respect to man*—in the widest sense of the term, viz., his human nature; would not such a sense be allowable in this case, unless we could find some other instances, in which it has *exactly* the same meaning? If the nature of the subject should be our guide in one case, why not in the other? Or, must we suppose something *metaphysical* in that man's nature, denoting *distinction* or *society* in *himself*, and give it that sense? Is this according to the teachings of "our exegetical guide," or of common sense? It is the *principle* of which we speak.

We are told, very justly, in the same article (p. 16),

that the meaning of the Greek word in this passage, rendered *was* in our version, is, "*was existing, or was already in existence.*" If so, why can we not properly give to the preposition which follows it, the sense of, *as to, in respect to*, or consider it as used *periphrastically*, and present a most important meaning of the passage, without being driven to the necessity of saying, or implying that we mean, "*God was with himself?*"

We may suppose the sacred writer of this passage, to have had in his eye a notion of some of the philosophers of his time, respecting the *Æons*—a kind of subordinate gods, *emanations* from the supreme Divinity—a notion adopted by some of the philosophizing or heathenizing teachers of Christianity; and that he expresses in the passage before us, the proper meaning of the word *Logos*; a word (or its equivalent) then in use among the Jews, and well understood; at least by the more enlightened part of them. According to this view of the case, the sacred writer presents his thoughts with remarkable skill, and in a most methodical manner; admirably adapted to correct erroneous views of the subject, and to enlighten and confirm his readers in the knowledge of the truth. He speaks:

1. Of the *Being himself*,—here called the *Logos*,—*antecedent* to all Divine manifestation—(vs. 1, 2). What the writer says of him, at the outset, is contained in *four* statements, or affirmations.

(1.) The *first* is, that "*at the very beginning of the creation, the Logos was existing;*" or was already



in existence—plainly *implying* that he was preëxistent and eternal.

(2.) The *second* is a little *explanatory* of the first, and is as much as to say: “The Logos was already existing *πρὸς τὸν θεόν*, in respect to his Godhead—the Divine nature itself, or in the condition of God ;” no manifestation of God having yet been made. The sacred writer here speaks of this Being in *one particular point of view*, viz. : in reference to his Godhead. This method of speaking is frequently and familiarly employed. In a time of great political excitement, a man wholly incompetent to the office is appointed a *Judge*. A political opponent says of him: “Well—I am satisfied of one thing; the Judge will not live long.” “What!” says another, “will his enemies take his life?” “No: I speak of the *Judge*, not the *man*.” In this common way of expressing our thoughts, the writer speaks of the truly Divine nature of this Being, designating him by the name, “*the Logos*,” long before the *occasion* of its application to him occurred. One reason of this is very obvious; he was about to speak of the *manifestations* of this Being, particularly of his manifestation in the flesh. Such a use of *special names*,—as we have before had occasion to observe,—is very common. Thus we say; “*Abraham* was born in Ur of the Chaldees”—ninety-nine years before the name was given him.

(3.) The *third* is a brief statement, in plain terms, designed to confirm what had been said before: “*The Logos was God* ;” or, *was existing as the true God*

himself; though as yet *unrevealed*. Therefore, he was not a *derived* being, nor an *emanation* from God.

(4.) The *fourth* is a comprehensive declaration, presenting in one statement the substance of the three preceding ones, viz: "*The same Being* of whom I speak, *was, at the very beginning of all things, existing as it respects the Divine nature only—as God*; when he began to *manifest* himself, whether in the production of spirit or of matter, *then it was, that I speak of him as the Logos*; i. e. *God manifesting himself.*" So much, relative to the Being himself. The writer speaks ?

2. Of the *manifestation* of this Being,—in two respects.—(vs. 3, 4).

(1.) In *creation*: "*He created all things,—not ONE thing was created without his agency.*" Of course, he was not himself created.

(2.) In *redemption*: "*In him was life*;" the whole of life—self-existent and spiritual life; "*and this life was the source of Divine and saving knowledge to men.*" The writer speaks:

3. Of the *moral condition* of those on whom he undertook to bestow spiritual life (v. 5): "*They were in the thickest moral darkness*; so thick, as not to comprehend—receive and retain—the *light* which shone upon them."

This appears to be essentially the view of the *Logos*, which is presented by the sacred writer, in the first five verses of his Gospel. He makes the same general statement, setting forth the *Supreme Divinity* of the

Logos several times, according to his frequent manner of stating important truth, in varied language, and with some diversity of thought, all serving to explain, confirm, and impress the general truth, and partaking more or less of the nature of Hebrew parallelism. Who shall say that the passage, thus understood, does not evince consummate wisdom, skill, order, harmony, and knowledge of the subject, in the sacred writer? He has, indeed, presented his thoughts in the simple style of the Hebrew-Greek, or rather, we might say, in the *Johannean* idiom; and it would be somewhat difficult to present each form of ~~the~~ thought *literally*, and at the same time *fully*, in the idiom of our own language; but not more difficult, than *so* to present many other truths contained in the original Scriptures. Could we enter *exactly* into the views of this writer, and see all the circumstances present to his mind, as he saw them, there would doubtless be far less difficulty in understanding this passage, than has generally been felt. This, however, is not the fault of the sacred *writer*, but of the *reader*. It has been well said,\* that "every writer has special reference to his own times; to those for whom he primarily writes; not to future times, so as to *neglect his contemporaries*. The obscurity which arises from this mode of writing is not a *necessary* one; but results merely from the change which time makes in languages. It is an obscurity common to all good ancient writers; for the ground of

\* Stuart's *Ernesti's Intérop.* Andover ed., 1822. p. 61.

it lies in the ignorance of later readers, and not in the writers."

No one who may have a different view of the above passage from that which has just been given, *if he has a manly, opposing argument in store*, will attempt to express this view *literally throughout*, in English terms, according to the Hebrew-Greek or Johannean idiom; like saying, "Jehovah our Gods is one Jehovah," or "calling Charlemagne the great emperors, to denote special dignity." An exact literal rendering of many passages, without any explanatory words, would do violence to the sense, or to the idiom of our language, or both.

We have been confirmed in the preceding view of the passage before us, by the manner in which the word *Logos* is used in the *Targums*, or translations into the Chaldee of the Hebrew Scriptures. "When the Jews returned from Babylon, the mass of them spoke the Chaldee language, modified in some degree by the ancient Hebrew. Hence it became necessary that this same mass should have the Scriptures translated into the Chaldee or Hebræo-Chaldaic dialect."—(*Stuart*). Different portions of the ancient Scriptures were translated by different individuals; and hence they received names accordingly. Taken together, they were called the *Targums*; and the translators, the *Targumists*. We remember to have heard it long since stated, by competent authority, that the phrase, "the Word of Jehovah," is used for *Jehovah* six hundred times in these *Targums*. We wish here to intro-

duce Prof. Stuart's account of the use of this phrase in these books. He says, in the article already referred to (pp. 20, 21) :

"This expression [the *Logos* or *Word* of *Jehovah*] is employed in the Targums, in cases almost without number, instead of the simple *Jehovah* or *Elohim* of the Hebrew text. In particular, wherever the Hebrew represents the Divine Being as *in action*, or as *revealing himself* by his works, or by communications to individuals ; in a word, wherever God operates *ad extra* [externally] and thus *reveals himself*, it is common for the Targumists to say that his *Word* operates, or makes the revelation. A few examples are necessary to show the manner of this.

"In Ex. 19 : 17, the Hebrew runs thus : 'And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp *to meet with God* ;' in the Targum, 'To meet with *the Word of the Lord*.' Job 42 : 9, (Heb.) : 'The Lord accepted Job ;' in the Targum, '*The Word of the Lord* accepted Job.' Ps. 2 : 4, (Heb.) : 'The Lord shall have them in derision ;' in the Targum, '*The Word of the Lord* shall deride them.' Gen. 26 : 3, (Heb.) : 'I will be with thee ;' Targum, '*My Word* shall be thy helper.' Gen. 39 : 2, (Heb.) : 'The Lord was with Joseph ;' Targum, '*The Word of the Lord* was with Joseph.' Lightfoot, that great master of Rabbinical learning, says of these and the like cases : 'So, all along, that kind of phrase is most familiar amongst them.'—Hor. Bib. in Johan. 1 : 1. Specially is this the case, *when God is represented as transacting affairs of mo-*

*ment between himself and his people.* Thus in Lev. 26 : 46, (Heb.): 'These are the statutes which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel;' Targum, 'Between *his Word* and the children of Israel.' Deut. 5 : 5, (Heb.): 'I stood between you and the Lord, at that time;' Targum, 'I stood between you and *the Word of the Lord.*' Deut. 20 : 1, (Heb.): 'The Lord thy God is with thee;' Targum, 'Jehovah is thy God, *his Word* is with thee.'

"Such is the striking usage of the Targumists, in respect to the phrase *Word of God*. They carry it indeed still further, and often express by *Memra* [the Chaldee *Word*, in question] the emphatic pronouns *myself, thyself, himself*. . . . . Thus *Memra* [the *Logos*] came, by usage among the Jews, to be employed not only to designate *God* as *acting*, or *making some revelation* of *himself* or of *his will*, but to be employed as a kind of intensive periphrastic pronoun to designate *God himself*. The transition was not unnatural. That which is often employed to express *God revealed*, may easily come at last to express the idea of *God simply considered*."

Here we have the *nucleus* of the whole subject. The Chaldee word for *Logos*, designating *God revealing himself*, was in use and well understood among the Jews, in the time of John; the Hebrew being a dead language. We are gratified in having *so full* an account of the matter, before it is too late to make use of it, in illustration of the subject. Considering all the circumstances of the case, the *Logos* was the most

appropriate word John could have used to designate *God revealing himself* to man, in a degree and with a clearness and fullness which he had never done before. "Christ, the Light of the world, was the first who fully developed the Godhead: 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he hath declared him.*' In the connection in which this passage stands, the implication is that neither Moses, nor any other Old Testament writer, has made a full disclosure of the gospel-doctrine respecting God. 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'"—(*Stuart.*) God revealed himself by Moses, and by other ancient prophets, but *preëminently* so by Jesus Christ. He plainly "declared," or revealed, the Godhead to man. "God in Christ" was God (the Logos) manifesting himself in the work of redemption.

The phrase, *the Logos* or *Word of God*, anciently had three meanings: The *Jewish* sense was, *Jehovah*. This has been particularly noticed. The *Alexandrine* Jewish sense was that of an *emanation* from the Supreme Being; not, in the fullest and highest sense, the *Supreme God*. If we understand it correctly, Philo Judæus Alexandrinus used the term in this sense. The third, or *heathen* sense, was that of an *inferior god*, "the creator of the world;" which some of the oriental philosophers "distinguished from the Supreme Divinity by the name of *demiurge*."—(*Mosheim.*) Plato calls it *intelligence*, *creator*, (*demiurge*), *Logos*, and *wisdom*.—(*Knapp.*)

Other periphrastic modes of expression are used to designate the true God, beside the one already dwelt upon. In a multitude of instances, as every attentive reader of the Scriptures must have observed, the *name of Jehovah*, or name of the Lord, or of God, is used for *Jehovah*, or God *himself*; *my name*, for *me*; and *thy name*, for *thee*. We shall refer to a few of them.

1 Chr. 22 : 7 : "It was in my mind to build an house unto the *name* of the LORD (*Jehovah*) my God;" for, "unto *Jehovah* my God." So, 2 Chr. 6 : 7, 10. In Ps. 20 : 1 : "The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the *name* of the God of *Jehovah* defend thee;" for, "the *God* of Jacob defend thee." So, Ps. 44 : 20; 69 : 30; 113 : 3; Rom. 2 : 24, *et al.*

*My name* is very often used for *me*; as in 2 Sam. 7 : 13 : "He shall build an house for *my name*"—"for *me*." So, 1 Kings 5 : 5; 8 : 18, 19; 1 Chr. 22 : 8, 10; 2 Chr. 6 : 8, 9; Ps. 91 : 14; Jer. 23 : 27; Zech. 13 : 9; Mal. 1 : 6; 2 : 2, 5; 4 : 2, *et al.*

*Thy name* is, in a great number of instances, used for *thee*. 2 Sam. 22 : 50 : "I will sing praises unto *thy name*"—"unto *thee*." So, Ps. 9 : 2; 18 : 49; 61 : 8; 66 : 4; 92 : 1; 99 : 3; 145 : 1, 2; John 12 : 28; Acts 9 : 14, *et passim*.

Some periphrastic mode of designating the true God, was very common among the Hebrews. One reason of this may be found in that *reverence* which they cherished toward God, and manifested especially toward that "ineffable name," JEHOVAH, by which he was called. After the captivity in Babylon this reverence degene-



rated into superstition; so that the Jews ceased to repeat the name, and forgot its pronunciation. The *Seventy* render it by Κύριος, LORD, even in Ex. 6 : 3. So do our English translators, *generally*; and, as the reader has doubtless observed, it is, in such cases, printed in small capitals, to distinguish it from another word, which is also translated Lord.

In view of what has been already advanced, we feel constrained to dissent from the following statements, contained in the learned and able article to which reference has repeatedly been made: "To say, then, that the *Logos is with him*, must mean, that there is a diversity of some kind between the *Logos* and *God*; although the writer has not undertaken to define in what that diversity consists."—p. 31. "An intimate connection [or community] between *God* and the *Logos* may be asserted, and be credible, without any explanation of the manner of that connection."—p. 37.

But we had before been told by this venerable author (p. 16), that the Greek verb (ἦν) rendered *was*, means here *was existing*: "At the beginning, *the Logos was existing*." How does it appear that this verb has not the same meaning in the very next member of the same sentence? Does the *nature of the subject* prove this? It does not so appear. Does the *language* of the second member of the sentence prove it? If so, it must be the word *προς*—*with*, or this in connection with the word *God*. But if we follow "our exegetical guide," and at the same time duly consider the meaning which, according to this learned Professor,

and able lexicographers, this preposition sometimes has, shall we not be constrained to say, that the meaning of this member of the sentence is: "The Logos was existing *in respect to God—as to the Divine nature, or very God* ;"—especially, when it is immediately added: "the Logos was God," or was existing as "true God—*supreme God* ?" There would *then* be "some *diversity* between God and the Logos"—the same as between God *unrevealed* and God *revealing himself*. This sense of the passage does not require more expletive words, not in the original, to give in English the full sense of the text, than do a great many passages of the original Scriptures; as any scholar may see by looking into those Scriptures, and as any English reader may see by looking at the *italic words* in his English Bible. (Leave out those *italic words*, and see how it will read.) This author clearly shows, on pp. 32, 33, that there are many passages of Scripture which cannot be translated literally and give the sense, because our language or our idiom is not competent *so to do it*; a defect not peculiar, but common to the translation of all languages. Nor does the passage before us, understood as above, and expressed in some of the forms already given, depart more from the *literal* meaning of the original words, than is requisite in giving the true sense of many *other* passages of the same sacred writer.

In John 14 : 23, it is said: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come (*πρὸς*) *unto* him, and make our abode

(*παρά*) *with him.*" Who thinks of understanding this language literally? Plainly it is to be understood in a *modified* sense; and just *so much* modified as the *nature of the subject* requires. It doubtless expresses high favor, intimate communion and fellowship; and of course is understood in a *modified* sense. Bloomfield, remarking on this passage, says: "God is said to *come* to men, when he promises or bestows peculiar benefits on them; also to  *dwell* or  *remain* with those whom he especially favors; and also to  *leave* and  *depart* from those whom he ceases to benefit."

Christ says, John 14 : 11 : "Believe me, that I am *in* the Father, and the Father *in* me." How was the Son *in* the Father, and the Father *in* the Son? Can we say, "David was *in* Jonathan, and Jonathan *in* David?" If the *nature* of the *subject* is to have anything to do with determining the sense of the passage just quoted, why not also of the declaration, "the Logos was *with God*?" If we may interpret the *former* phraseology in a modified sense, as denoting intimate spiritual *union, fellowship, friendship*, why not, in accordance with the nature of the subject, interpret the *latter* declaration, as denoting *the oneness* and *sameness* of the Logos with the real nature of God—with very God himself? This would be exactly in accordance with the teachings of "our exegetical guide."

We had occasion, in the first chapter of this work, to introduce a remark of Prof. Stuart relative to the use of the preposition *δια*, in Rom. 5 : 19. He is right in

saying that we cannot "lay any stress on the preposition itself as determining either for or against" the point in question there; but must examine "*the general nature of the whole phrase*;"—yes, and what is *elsewhere* revealed respecting the same subject. So we say of the preposition *πρὸς*—*with*, in the passage before us. To judge of its meaning here, we must look not only at "the general nature of the whole phrase," but at the general subject of the Godhead as revealed in the Scriptures; in other words, we must proceed in our investigations, in the light of "our exegetical guide." It would not be in exact keeping with such an occupation, to go into hair-splitting niceties as to the classic use of a Greek preposition (though such use favors our interpretation), employed by a fisherman of Galilee, in the plain and simple style of the apostle John, when its meaning often—not to say generally—depends on the character of the *company* in which it is found.

In deciding such a question as this, it is important to consider the great *latitude* of meaning with which prepositions are used. Schleusner gives to the Greek preposition *πρὸς*, twenty-five meanings, when used with the *single case* which it governs in the passage before us—the *accusative*. The last one is the meaning we have given to it in this passage. To *δια*, he gives thirty meanings, beside subordinate ones; and to *ἐν*, thirty-one meanings. The *proper* meaning in each case is to be ascertained by actual examination. In English, Webster gives to the preposition *with*, fifteen meanings; *by*, fourteen; *to*, twenty-eight or twenty-nine.

He adds : " In the foregoing explanation of *to*, it is to be considered that the definition given is not always the sense of *to* by itself, but the sense rather of the word *preceding* it, or *connected with* it, or of *to* in connection with *other words*." What is the meaning of the preposition *to*, in these lines of Watts ?

" O, may I live *to* reach the place  
Where he unveils his lovely face !"\*

The meaning evidently is not, " O, may I live *long enough to* reach the place ;" but, "*so as to—so that I may* reach the place." The foregoing remark of Webster is true of prepositions in general, and of the Greek preposition in question.

Our object in these remarks is, to show that it will not do to build an important theory—important *if true*—on a preposition, the meaning of which often depends entirely on the nature of the subject, or on the connection in which it is found. When Paul says that one class of persons are "justified *by* faith," and another class "*through* faith ;" we are not to suppose that he is speaking of *different methods* of justification.

The interpretation already given to the passage before us, "the Logos was with God," does not modify the so-called *literal* meaning of the language, any more than the declaration, "I am *in* the Father and the Father *in* me," is modified by the common interpreta-

\* Edition of 1816, and in Dwight.

tion of it. The same remark applies to the phrases, "Walk *in* the Spirit" (Gal. 5 : 16 ; "So walk ye *in* him" (Col. 2 : 6) ; "He that dwelleth *in* love, dwelleth *in* God, and God *in* him" (1 Jn. 4 : 16). The common interpretation of this whole class of passages—which is not small—modifies their literal meaning as much as does that given of the passage under examination. Such modification of Scripture language is very often required by the nature of the subject, and is especially to be expected in regard to the language of one who is remarkable for writing "in a loose and popular way," for common, plain, uneducated men ; and not "in a learned and philosophical manner," for philosophical minds. We do this in both of the cases just mentioned, for the same reason ; because *the nature of the subject requires it*. And why is it not as philosophical, as philosophical, as rational, as scriptural, as unobjectionable an interpretation in the one case, as in the other ?

Still, some insist on interpreting the phrase in question *literally*—or *quasi-literally*—as denoting "society," and therefore a distinction of Persons in the very *nature* of the Godhead, in order to form that society. They begin by stating—truly enough—that the Bible teaches there is but one God ; and that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. These they have called "different revelations ;" the *latter* one implying a metaphysical distinction of three Persons in the very nature of this one God—instead of understanding it in a more simple way. They

then fortify their position by the *argument from ignorance* : “ We do not any of us know enough of the internal nature of God to affirm, that these ‘ different revelations ’ are contradictory, or that the facts which they disclose respecting the nature of God are absurd. We therefore conclude that they are true.” The proper answer to be given to such an argument is : “ Neither do *you* know enough of the internal nature of God, to assert that they are *not* contradictory and absurd : therefore, leave this subject where the Bible leaves it. *Stop right THERE !*”

Now, let this argument change sides : let us apply it to the *other* view which has been taken of the Trinity ; viz., that God, revealed as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, acts in three different capacities and relations in the work of redemption. The argument is this : “ We do not any of us know enough of God and his government, to affirm that this view of the Trinity is not perfectly consistent with his nature, attributes, and relations to the universe. We are not competent to disprove this position, or show it to be absurd ; therefore, it must be true. Nay, more ; this view of the Trinity, *is true because it is so revealed*, even if *more* than this is true ; viz., even if there are three eternal distinctions or three Persons in the nature of the Godhead itself.”

But these “ different revelations ” are not contradictory ; they are entirely consistent : it is only men’s *interpretations* of them that conflict. The revealed *truths* are not absurd ; but only the *constructions* and

*inferences* which men put upon and derive from them. It is not the sacred *writer* who needs to be freed from absurdity ; but the human *interpreter*, who, by his own interpretation, has *created* that absurdity. It is this interpreter who conflicts with *revelation* ; not revelation with *itself*. Sound philosophy does, indeed, require us to receive these truths *as they are revealed*, but not *his interpretation* of them ; for that is not revealed. The mistake lies in substituting the interpretations or inferences,—which he gets by looking at the Scriptures through antique scholastic glasses of uneven surface, discoloring and distorting them,—for the truths themselves as they are revealed. Would he only lay aside his scholastic glasses and look at what is actually revealed, with his naked eye and in the light of our common “*exegetical guide*,” he would see the truth as it is. If it were *true*—which is questionable—that there is a *possibility* of such a union of three Persons in the very nature of the Godhead, as a “*society*,” constituting but one God, still, we are not any of us competent to prove or to affirm such a union as a *reality*, until we have another revelation setting it forth ; for the Scriptures do not affirm it. We do not say that all this is *as clear as syn-light* ; but it is so clear that common eyes, if they do not look at the object through a false medium, can see it plainly, in its length and breadth. The *argument from ignorance*, therefore, even if granted, proves just nothing at all, except that—*we are ignorant*.



The error in respect to this subject, lies in three unwarrantable assumptions.

1. In taking language appropriate to men, and applying it to God *as if literally true*, and yet in apparent opposition to the general tenor of the Scriptures, that there is but one Jehovah, one God, one infinite *Divine* agent in the universe.

2. In ascribing to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost the *properties* or *attributes* of *three* distinct individualities—three distinct and competent Divine agents; and then, to avoid the appearance and evade the charge of *tritheism*, uniting these three eternal distinctions, these three sets of Divine attributes, these three distinct and competent moral agents, in *one substratum*—an unknown, unintelligible, metaphysical *non-entity* (so far as appears), which does not alter the real *facts* of the case at all.

*The Independent* for April 26, 1849, referring to a certain view of the Trinity, makes the following pertinent and timely remarks: "It is no better than the *quasi* emanation-theories of the Arian and Athanasian controversy—no better than the theory of three sets of attributes inhering in one substance; which to our view is nothing else than *an empty clatter of words* which in their *combination* have *no real meaning*. Discussion on such a subject—theory, hypothesis, explanation, or whatever it may call itself—*the moment it attempts anything more than the ascertainment of the facts revealed in the record, sinks into an unfathom-*

*able abyss* ; and therefore the faith of all Christians is constantly tending *to work itself free* of all dogmatism on this point, and to rest in *the GREAT FACTS*, with all the impenetrable mystery which hangs around them." [We would rather say, "*whatever* impenetrable mystery may hang around them."] It is even so. And these *heavings* which are sometimes very manifest in the Christian community, are no mistaken indications of an effort, on the one part, to throw off this burden of a *theory*, and on the other to retain it, as though it contained the very essence of all spiritual life.

These three distinct and competent moral agents (so assumed) taken separately, are, for convenience' sake, called *Persons* ; but thus united together, they are called one Being—one *God*. And yet, so represented, they are—in every intelligible sense—three distinct, eternal, harmonious Divinities, consulting and covenanting together and communicating happiness to one another; though metaphysically united in one substance or substratum. This "one substance" is only saying that they do not acknowledge, but (in *words*) wholly discard, the notion of three Gods. We accept it as an intentional *disclaimer*, but not as the *truth*, nor as, in any proper sense, a *fit explanation* of the truth. Theoretically and virtually they are a "society" of three distinct, united, equal, infinite, eternal and harmonious Beings, designated by the specific name of *God*. So the whole human race, consisting of innumerable individuals, is called by the specific name of *man*. The former have one common nature, and are united in one

substratum : the latter are homogeneous in nature, and are united in a common humanity.

It is extremely difficult to keep up this distinction of Persons and this union in one Being, with perfect consistency. At one time, each of the three is a distinct and competent moral agent—one “mind;” then, presently, all the three are included “in the Divine mind.” Even Prof. Stuart, who holds the common theory of the Trinity in the *least* exceptionable form,—the same as the simple Trinity of the Scriptures, with the exception of a few metaphysical terms, to us unintelligible,—sometimes speaks, without his usual caution, and from a seemingly unconscious necessity, of more “*beings*” than one, in the Godhead. He says (*Bib. Sacra*, p. 32) : “An actual literal *space-relation* is out of the question, as has already been hinted, for the Logos and God are *spiritual BEINGS*, yea purely spiritual.” So difficult is it to preserve a consistent use of terms, in setting forth the common theory. And it seems not very material to the subject *itself*, whether, with one or another of the writers quoted on the preceding pages, we speak of each Person taken *separately*, as one “spirit,” one “mind,” or one “being;” or of the three united in one God, as “the Divine spirit,” “the Divine mind,” or “the Divine being.” They are virtually *three Gods*.

3. In maintaining that these assumptions are to be received as the *genuine teachings of revelation*; treating them as Divine verities, and the non-reception of them in this light as dangerous heresy. The most effectual argument in the support and defense of this

assumption has been the *argumentum ad invidiam*, or "mad-dog" argument. To this have been added, that of civil and ecclesiastical law, employed in a manner accordant with the taste and fashion of the age; that of an excited, overpowering public opinion; and whatever else has promised to be effectual, in the circumstances of the case.

But these assumptions can by no means be admitted in the general argument; for they are not derived from the Scriptures by fair interpretation, but by dialectic subtilty. Fair interpretation, in the light of "our exegetical guide," does not, either necessarily or consistently, imply that the phrase, "the Logos was with God," means with him *socially*—with him as an associate "Person," a "Peer," or a "distinct and competent moral agent" in the very nature of the Godhead. "Such an artificial distinction built on a grammatical circumstance of such minuteness" as the use of the preposition in this phrase, "is not at all in the spirit of John." If true in *this* instance,—and it needs more evidence than has yet been produced, to establish it,—it must be a singular case; it is not *Johannean*. But if God designed to reveal to man the *real existence* of three Persons in the Divine nature itself,—after having so distinctly and so often asserted his *oneness* in the Old Testament, in language addressed to the *common sense* of men, and by that sense to be received and understood, and after Christ himself *personally* had taught the same truth in the same language,—would it not have been more in accordance with God's usual course

of proceeding, to have *somewhere* revealed so important a truth, as this is claimed to be, *more plainly* ? Is it his known method to reveal *highly important truths*, which yet seem wholly inconsistent with those which he has clearly taught, *so obscurely* that his children, who really desire to know and do their Father's will, are greatly perplexed and distressed in their humble efforts to ascertain what he means ? Some persons, indeed, looking through a certain scholastic medium, find—or *think* they find—the common theory taught almost everywhere. They discover it in the natural language of devout adoration, and of intense emotion in religion, in poetry, in eloquence, and in music ; as may be daily seen or heard. Yes, the *seraphim* taught it, when Isaiah heard them *THRICE* crying, one to another, “ *Holy ! holy ! holy !* is Jehovah of hosts ; the whole earth is full of *HIS* glory ! ” The four living creatures, whom John saw and heard in his Apocalyptic vision, each one having six wings full of eyes within and around—these *rapt spirits* taught it, when they rested not day or night, saying, “ *Holy ! holy ! holy !* Lord God Almighty, who *was* and *is*, and *is to come* ! ” Such persons put under contribution to this theory almost everything in nature, but most of all, a *fruitful imagination*.

Still, if any think that this Greek preposition in the passage before us, supplies them with a telescope of such magnifying power and perfect transparency, that they can penetrate into the Divine nature itself, and discover there evident distinctions which lay a founda-

tion for three Persons in the very nature of the God-head ; and *if they are properly authorized so to use it*,—they have a perfect right to do so, on their own responsibility. Yet it is very *doubtful*, to say the least, whether this sacred writer intended to furnish them with such a telescope ; *clear*, it may seem to their own imaginations, but dark, *very dark*, to many a humble inquirer after the truth which God has revealed. In so many ages, and in so many instances all along, from very early Christian times down to the present, has this been the fact with respect to the *common* THEORY, that we can hardly say of it, as is said of “ life and immortality,” that it is “ brought to light by the gospel.”

A few other passages demand examination, as they are supposed to have an important bearing upon the theory in question. One of these is in John 3 : 13 : “ No one (*οὐδεις*) hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.”

Was “ the Son of man,” at the time when he uttered these words, “ in heaven ?” Was he not on the earth ? Did he ever, *literally*, “ come down from heaven,” as he afterward ascended up ? What, then, is its meaning ?

In remarking on this passage, Bloomfield says : “ The phrase *ascended up to heaven*, is used agreeably to the language commonly employed of one who *announced any revelation*—that he had ascended to heaven and fetched his knowledge from thence.” He

adds : "The sense then is, ' And no one has ever ascended to heaven, to *bring down* this information from heaven, nor can any one except *the Son of man* (i. e. the Messiah), reveal the counsels of God for the salvation of man ;' i. e. No one knoweth the counsels of God but I, who came down from God"—I, who am commissioned to announce this revelation of his will. God graciously manifested himself to man, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. His being *commissioned and sent forth as the Messiah, and endowed with the requisite knowledge to be communicated to men, of God and the way of salvation*—this was his "coming down from heaven."

Prof. Mayer remarks respecting this passage : "The words were evidently spoken in a *tropical* sense ; for in their literal acception they have no consistent meaning. . . . . The figurative idea which is conceived, is that of a royal council and a council-chamber in heaven, where the affairs of the kingdom of God are discussed, and purposes are decreed. Some of these decrees are sent down to mankind on earth by messengers of God, inspired men, and thus become things on earth ; that is, things revealed and known to men, and accessible to them ; but other decrees are still reserved in heaven, as secrets of state, and are known only to the king and to those who are in his confidence and intimacy. Compare Deut. 30 : 11, 12. Jesus had told Nicodemus of earthly things, of things already revealed through the prophets, such as the necessity of a new birth, a new heart and a new spirit ; and because Nico-

demus was slow to believe him, he asked, by way of rebuke, 'How will ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?'—of things which are yet among the mysteries of God? And to assure this Jewish ruler that no other person could make those heavenly things known to men, he remarked, 'No man hath ascended up to heaven,' etc. The sense of these words is, therefore, no other than this: No man has entered into the secret counsels of God which are reserved in heaven, but he that came down, as it were, from heaven, *with a commission from God, to make them known*; even the Son of man, who is intimate with God and has access to his secret purposes."\*

There is no more difficulty respecting the meaning of this passage, whether we consider God—the Father, the Logos, the Holy Spirit, or all the fullness of the Godhead—as dwelling in him, and communicating to him all the knowledge requisite in the case, and performing by or through him all that Divine work which was needful to be done; or consider "the second Person of the Trinity" (according to the common theory) as dwelling in him. There is no more of his "being in heaven," or "coming down from heaven," in the one case than in the other. But there seems to be an impression on many minds, that there was a literal or quasi-literal *leaving of heaven*, by the second Person of the Trinity—that the Son of God in eternity, did actually "leave the bosom of the Father" when the

\* Bib. Repos., Jan. 1840, p. 155.



Logos became incarnate, and was, for the time being, no more in heaven, and possessed no more Divine glory or enjoyment there, as he always had done ; but that he literally took up his abode on earth for some years, —existed and operated, enjoyed and suffered, only here. But the Scriptures, understood according to the Hebrew or Hebrew-Greek idiom, in which they were written, appear to teach no such doctrine as this. It seems evidently to be a figment of that scholastic philosophy, in which the general subject of the Trinity has been enveloped for centuries.

Similar to the above, is the passage in John 6 : 62 : “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ?” The *Son of man*—the *Messiah*. “Before” *when* ? Doubtless, before the Logos became incarnate. But where was “the Son of man” before the incarnation ? As *Messiah*, he had no existence till the occurrence of that ever-memorable event. He who, in the fullness of time, became manifest in the flesh, existed *in heaven*, not as “the Son of man”—the Messiah, but as *very God*. To that glorious, blessed world, the disciples *did*, afterward, see him (the Messiah) ascend up.—Acts 1 : 9, 10. .

But the passage in John 17 : 5, has been regarded as plainly implying or teaching the idea of “society”—of the Divine nature of the Son before the incarnation “in connection or community” with the Divine nature of the Father : “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” This meaning, however, ap-

pears to depend entirely upon the dark medium through which the passage has been viewed. It has been assumed, or regarded as already proved,—and of this proof the passage before us has been considered as a very *material part*,—that there is more than one Person, more than one “distinct and competent moral agent,” in the very *nature* of God. This, however, is little else than reasoning in a circle. But if we look at the passage with the naked eye of common sense and in the light of “our exegetical guide,” instead of viewing it through a medium which *multiplies its images*—producing “*three* distinct and competent moral agents in God,”—it will present before us for contemplation and adoration, *one* infinite, eternal, immutable, incomprehensible and perfect Divine agent—“one Jehovah,” manifesting himself variously and graciously; yet not as a “society” of infinite Divine agents, but as *one only living and true God*; just as it appears to be, to the unsophisticated “common mind.”

“*Glorify thou me.*” Who utters this petition? It is he who calls himself “the Son of man,” *the Messiah*; he who is the “Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus.” Surely “our exegetical guide” does not teach us that the *Divine nature* which dwelt in the Son, prayed to the Divine nature of the Father. It was the Son himself—“the man” who acted as “mediator.” He prayed to God his Father, that he would glorify *him*—the Son—the Messiah. But what was it to *glorify the Messiah*? It was, to make it manifest to all that he *was* the Messiah—to

honor him *as such*, by sanctioning his doings, raising him to his throne (but not for the sake of his own personal aggrandizement), and rendering effectual *the work* which he performed as the ambassador of God to man—to give efficacy to the gospel when preached to men, and make it the means of their salvation. So far as these things are done, just so far the *Messiah* is honored—"glorified." This he desired, not for his own private gratification, but to honor God, and for the great cause in which he was engaged. It is evident he included all this in his prayer, because he extended his petition to all who were or should become his followers. He prayed that God would, in the way already specified, glorify the Son (the Messiah), that the Messiah might thereby glorify God his Father. This would be the case in respect to all who should obtain "eternal life"—who should "know," i. e. acknowledge, love and obey the only true God, and Jesus who was anointed and sent forth among men as the Messiah. He thus prayed for himself *as the Messiah*, and for the success of *his work* in all future time. By this success, God the Father, who had devised the plan and sent his Son to perform a certain work, and his Son, the Messiah himself, would be "glorified." His mind was evidently intent upon *the success of his peculiar work down to the end of time*. This was the burden of his prayer. It was the object of his coming into the world, and that for which he was about to die.

"Glorify thou me *with thine own self*." God is "glorified" by means of this work of saving men ;

which originated with him, and is carried on and will be carried out by his gracious agency. So the Messiah himself, who was greatly honored in being appointed to that office, would be "glorified"—honored—extolled, in connection with the supreme honor which would redound to God his Father, as the originator and author of it all. His language neither here nor elsewhere seems to justify us in the supposition that, in the midst of his prayer for his disciples and followers and for the success of the cause in which he was just going to die, he turned off his attention from the subject which everywhere else filled his heart, to pray for the personal enjoyment of that Divine glory which his Divine nature actually possessed in connection with the Father, "before the world was," but of which his Godhead was now deprived in his humiliation. Did the immaculate Son of God while here on earth—did our great High Priest who is now passed into the heavens,—ever before manifest such a regard to himself and his own personal gratification? Who that duly considers his self-denying principles, practice, life, can believe him now—with a full knowledge of the sufferings which were just before him, and which of necessity bore upon his mind, and with a heart overflowing with love to his Father, his followers and his kingdom—*now for the first time*, filled with longing for that Divine glory which he (referring to his Godhead, the Logos) had in heaven before the incarnation? or, that he—*the Messiah who prayed*—was, in these circumstances, pouring out such intense longings to witness that Divine, eter-

nal, uncreated glory which he had never beheld? No : such a theoretic, contracted view of his capacious love must not be *needlessly* attributed to Jesus, the great Messiah. He is continuing his last prayer for the same benevolent, noble object—the glory of the Messiah's peculiar work *in the success of the gospel* down to the end of time.

There are *two ways* in which this passage may be interpreted,—to say nothing of minor shades of meaning,—both of which have just been alluded to, and one of which is doubtless the true one.

1. One interpretation is given of the passage in accordance with a *scholastic theory*, which is, that there are three Persons—three eternal distinctions, or three infinite, self-existent minds—in the *nature* of God. According to this *theory*, the passage before us is understood to mean, that the second Person of the Trinity—either an eternal distinction, or an infinite, self-existent mind—existed in intimate connection or in blessed society with the first Person, and possessed, in common with him, Divine and eternal glory ; of which glory, during the period of the incarnation, the second Person was deprived : Christ, therefore, in his last prayer with his disciples, offered up an earnest petition to the first Person, his Father, that this Divine glory might be restored to the second Person—the Logos, or Son of God in eternity,—as it was at the beginning, “before the world was.” Where all this is taught, except in the *interpretation* of certain difficult passages (rendered difficult by scholasticism) to *fit this theory*, does not

appear. "Trinitarians have generally held and freely conceded, that this doctrine of Persons in the Godhead *is not directly taught in the Scriptures.*" This is true ; and we must wait for another revelation, before we can receive it as *revealed truth*—truth "directly taught;" for the wildest theories have been claimed, as taught by *inference*. We therefore, after what has been said of this theory on the preceding pages, dismiss its kindred *interpretation* of the passage before us, as *not in accordance with what is revealed* ; but only *with a theory*.

2. The other interpretation accords with *Scripture facts*, or with *truths which are explicitly revealed*. For, it is *revealed*, that God did honor or "glorify" his Son Jesus, the Messiah, in anointing him to that office for the work of mediation between God and men ; in raising him from the dead and exalting him to heaven ; and in giving success to his gospel in the sanctification and salvation of men. It is *revealed*, that he will continue thus to honor or "glorify" him as the Messiah, till all the redeemed from among men, from first to last, are gathered into heaven ;—with plain intimations, that his glory as Messiah will not then disappear. It is *also* revealed, that *whatever God actually does*, he eternally *purposed* to do—"before the world was." We are not taught in the Scriptures, that God does anything without plan—without purpose, or that he forms new plans or purposes all along, as though he did not "see the end from the beginning." Now, if God *has* thus glorified the Messiah,

and if he will *continue* to glorify him so long as the Messiah shall be known in heaven as the Savior of his redeemed ones ; then, he eternally *purposed* to do so—"before the world was." Not only will God glorify his Son, the Messiah, *in a manner suited to his office and his work* for the salvation of men ; but he will also, by the same means of his own devising. and by his *gracious agency* in carrying out his plan, glorify himself *preëminently*, in the full accomplishment of his object. In *connection with* thus glorifying himself, God *also* glorifies his Son Jesus. This view, then, is in strict accordance with truths which are clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures ; and this appears to be the natural and Scriptural interpretation of the passage, if we follow "our exegetical guide."

But it has been supposed that the latter part of the passage, "with the glory which *I had with thee before the world was,*" is "fatal" to the view which has now been expressed. Yet, in the light of the general subject, it is far otherwise. *With thee, παρὰ σοί.* This has been understood here, to denote "society," or what is equivalent to it. But this Greek preposition governing the dative, is susceptible of a different meaning, as in Rom. 11 : 25, and 12 : 16 : "wise *in your own conceit,*" παρ' ἑαυτοῖς—*within yourselves—in your own estimation.* This preposition also means *before, in the sight of* ; as in Rom. 2 : 11 : "There is no respect of persons *with God*"—*before God—in the sight of God.* The sense of παρὰ in either place is not very different from its meaning in the passage

before us. But we do not depend on the meaning of the preposition *alone*, here or elsewhere. Lexicographers often tell us that a word is used in a particular sense, only in a *few* places, or in *one* place. *How do they know that?* Is it not from a careful *examination* of those places, or of that place, where it is found, and from what they know of the general or particular subject?

But if such is the proper way to ascertain the particular meaning of words or phrases in ordinary cases, why not in this case? May we not proceed in this manner to ascertain the meaning of a passage in the New Testament, on a peculiar subject, without first ascertaining whether the words are used in *classic* and *heathen* authors, as they appear to be used here? What, in the mean time, has become of "our exegetical guide?" If we find words used in classic authors, as they evidently appear to be used in the Scriptures, it does, indeed, *strengthen* the conviction, that we have not misjudged in the matter; but are we not to follow "our guide," unless *that* follows strictly in the track of those authors, whose meaning must be ascertained in the *same way*? This would not be following it at all. In such case, what would become of the Christian sense of such words as those which are translated *virtue*, *humility*, *faith*, *grace*, *righteousness*, and the like—words which have a very different meaning in heathen and in Christian authors? It is plain, then, that we should proceed in our investigations, in the light of the general subject (in connection with the



context) to ascertain *what* particular words, or phrases, or sentences *mean* ; without being “fatally” prevented from doing so, by the light of classic authority or the dimness of scholastic philosophy.

On this principle, we feel justified in giving, nay, *required to give*, to the passage before us, the meaning which has been expressed, and which is briefly this : “ That the Son of God *prayed* that God his Father, in connection with glorifying himself supremely in the work of man’s salvation, would also glorify him as *the anointed Messiah*, even with that glory which he eternally purposed in himself that his Son should receive ; as made known in his promise repeatedly recorded in the Scriptures.”—Ps. 2 : 6–12 ; Isa. 53 : 10–12 ; *et. al.*

In like manner it is declared, 1 Pet. 1 : 20, that Christ, who shed his “precious blood” for the redemption of his people, “verily was *foreordained before the foundation of the world*, but was *manifest* in these last times for you.” God eternally purposed to send his Son the Messiah to perform the work in question, to accomplish it through him, and to honor him accordingly, in so doing. The language here and in the passage under consideration, is similar to that which is employed to set forth what God had determined to do for those whom he would save through Christ’s mediation : “ According as he hath *chosen us in him* [by means of him—through his mediation] *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.”—Eph. 1 : 4. “ Ac-

according to *his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus [through his mediation], before the world began ; but is now made manifest* by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.”—2 Tim. 1 : 9, 10.

In the general import of his prayer, there is a plain distinction indicated between the supreme glory of the Father and that which he supplicates for himself as Messiah. He *who prays*, does not ask for himself the glory which belongs to God his Father, and which would redound to him ; but for that which was promised to him *as the Messiah*. He prays for that which is *proper* for each, and which *belongs* to each. Is this “blasphemy?” Is it not done with the utmost propriety? Is it not in perfect keeping with the whole subject, and just as it should be? Those, likewise, who are “predestinated, called, and justified” through the mediation of Christ, and who “suffer with him,” will “be also *glorified* with him.”—(Rom. 8 : 30, 17.) This is declared and promised. Is it not, then, in the fullest sense proper, and a duty, for them to *pray* that they may *realize* this promise? If so, why was it not in the highest degree proper for the *Messiah* to pray, that the promise made to him in reference to his appropriate work may likewise be fulfilled? Then will it, in the issue, be true preëminently, “that God *in all things*” will “be glorified through Jesus Christ,—to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!”—1 Pet. 4 : 11.

This view of the passage before us seems to be in perfect keeping with the plain import of the Messiah’s

last prayer for the success of his mediation. Accordingly, he begins : " Father, the hour is come—the hour appointed for me to die ; glorify thy Son (the Messiah), by carrying on and completing the work thus begun, that thy Son also may thereby glorify thee. I *have* glorified thee since I have been on the earth, engaged in my mission : I have *finished* the work which thou gavest *me* to do here, as the Messiah. And now, O Father, complete this work ; and in connection with thus glorifying thyself, glorify thy Son also, as thou didst eternally purpose, and hast promised to do. As thou didst commit this work to my hands, so have I committed the publication of thy truth to my disciples. Give them complete success ; sanctify them through thy truth, and all those also who shall believe on me through their word, to the end of time."

The Messiah proceeds to pray, that all who were then, or who should afterward become, his followers, " may be one ;"—how *one* ? What *union* is this ? " *As thou, Father, art in me*"—the *Messiah*. He had often said, " the Father *is* in me ;" " the Father that *dwelleth* in me," i. e. *abideth permanently*. There was an abiding union, an indwelling of the Father in the Messiah ; God acting *in, by, through* him as the *Messiah* ; so that it was proper for him to say, in reference to himself as the " the Son of man," *I know not* " that day and hour ;" and in reference to God his *Father that dwelt in him*, " before Abraham was, *I am*." This *indwelling* formed a perfect union of purpose, of desire, of attachment, of object, and of effort

to accomplish it. He prayed that "they" might "be one in us," in *these respects*. He says nothing relative to a union of his *Divine nature*, considered as "a distinct and competent moral agent," with the *Divine nature* of the Father, considered as another "distinct and competent moral agent." He has left this particular out of sight—*unrevealed* ; just where he evidently intended it should be left ; and no human philosophy can make *any advance* toward such a revelation.

"The glory which thou hast conferred on me," in appointing me to take a part with thee in the blessed work of saving men, and which thou hast promised me hereafter ; the same glory "I have given them," by appointing them to take a part in the same work, and promising them a share in that happiness and honor which thou wilt confer on all who coöperate with us for this end. "Father, I earnestly desire that they also whom thou hast given me, may be gathered together in heaven, and may witness and participate in that happiness and honor which thou hast purposed and promised to bestow upon thy Son."

John 17 : 24 : "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." The love here specified, doubtless was,—not the love which the Father, as one Person in the Godhead, bore to the Logos as another Person in the Godhead, but—that *eternal* love which the Father bore to his beloved Son, "the man Christ Jesus." Just as God loved his *elect people* before the foundation of the world. 1 John 4 : 19 ; 2 Thes. 2 : 13 ; Eph. 1 : 4.

But the passage in Phil. 2 : 5-8, has been supposed to teach or to imply the truth of the common theory of the Trinity. We give it in the language of Prof. Stuart's translation, (*Miscell.* p. 112), which the reader can compare with the *common version*, and perhaps with the original Greek : " Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus ; who, being in the condition of God, did not regard his equality with God as an object of solicitous desire, but taking the condition of a servant, being made after the similitude of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Evidently this translation gives, with much greater exactness than that in our common version, the sense of the original text.

Though Christ was really God, yet he did not regard that claim " as an object of solicitous desire,"—he did not eagerly seize the opportunity to make this high but just claim, before men, while here among them. This sense of the text accords with the *matter of fact*. He did not make a show of doing so, but he often forebore to make that claim which he might have made without arrogance. What, then, did he do ? In general, he treated the subject very much as though he had no such rightful claim at all—calling himself " the Son of man," appearing as a man, a *servant* obedient to the will of Him that sent him on his errand of mercy, and humbling himself still more in the completion of his work, than he had done while living among men without a place to lay his head,—he became obedient even unto

death—the very death of the cross. It was, therefore, very much to the purpose that the apostle exhorted Christians to imitate the example which Christ had set them.

Jesus *himself* was not in the habit of making a direct claim to Supreme Divinity, and of saying that he was the true God. His great aim seems to have been to establish his claim to the *Messiahship*—that he was the Son of God and Savior of the world. He did the other more *indirectly*, e. g. by saying, “the Father is in me—I and my Father are one—the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the work.”

But John 5 : 17, 18 : “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” has been claimed as a *direct admission* on his part of his equality with God, in the highest sense of the terms ; “making himself equal with God.” The context, however, on a careful examination, appears to teach us a different doctrine. The Rev. Dr. Mayer seems to have presented a very just view of this passage. He says (*Bib. Repos.* Jan., 1840, pp. 144–6) :

“Jesus having healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day, the Jews charged him with a criminal violation of the sanctity of the day, and sought for that reason to put him to death. The design of Jesus was to prove his innocence of the crime of violating any law of God ; and for this purpose he says to them : ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.’ Upon this ‘the Jews sought the more to kill him, because,’ as the apostle tells us, ‘he had not only broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his

Father, making himself equal with God.' Did John believe that Jesus had broken the Sabbath? Certainly not. Neither, therefore, did he believe that Jesus made himself equal with God, in the sense in which the Jews understood him, or affected to understand him. In his judgment the allegation that Jesus had made himself equal with God, in their sense, by saying that God was his Father, was about as true as the charge that he had broken the Sabbath by healing the impotent man. The answer of Jesus shows what sort of equality he meant: it was an equality *quoad hoc*: an equality consisting in this, that both the Father and he wrought on the Sabbath day. . . . . So far from claiming that equality with God which the interpretation we are opposing ascribes to him, he entirely disclaims it."

In that remarkably tender and affectionate interview which Christ had with his disciples just before he offered up his last prayer, he remarked: "I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." He then adds:

John 16 : 13 : "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

In order to understand this passage correctly, it is necessary to enter, as far as possible, into all the circumstances of the case, as they then existed.

The disciples had been with Jesus for several years, enjoying his affectionate counsels and faithful instruc-

tions ; and they loved and revered him as their Lord and Master, and trusted in him as the Messiah. But they had, in some respects, very erroneous views of his kingdom. They thought it was to be a *temporal* kingdom, "restored to Israel ;" he the king, and they his ministers of state. He had instructed them in the knowledge of his spiritual kingdom, as they were "able to bear it." Now he told them that he—who had hitherto been their teacher, guide, *comforter*—should soon leave them, and go his way to him that sent him on his mission to men ; but that he would pray the Father, and *He* would give them *another* paraclete—*ἄλλον παρακλητον*, *another* comforter, who would supply his place, and give them all needful instruction and aid in their work. At this announcement that their Master was soon to leave them, they were filled with sadness. *Jesus* they *knew*—he had instructed them—he had endowed them with special gifts when needed—they had *leaned* upon him ; but as to this "*other* paraclete"—this new aid which was promised them—whether the views of their master relative to his kingdom and to them, as they had understood the subject, would thereby be carried out, was to them a matter of some solicitude. He told them not to be troubled ; but as they believed in God, so to believe in him as their Messiah ; that he was going to prepare mansions for them in his Father's house, and then he would return and take them home to dwell with him. But they seemed not fully to understand him. He told them it was *expedient* for them—*better* for them,



for they would more fully understand his doctrine and their duty—that he should go away ; otherwise, *the Paraclete* (the promised endowment now personified and used with the *article* as a proper name), *the Comforter* would not come to them ; but after he had departed, he would send him. In the mean time (while he should be absent from them), this Comforter would abide with them continually, bring to their remembrance whatsoever he had said to them, aid them in their work, and instruct them in matters of the deepest interest ; but which now they were not able to bear. In this state of mind, understanding the subject but imperfectly, and full of doubt and solicitude,—though they had very great confidence in their Master,—it was natural for them to feel that they could not be sure what course this Paraclete would pursue ; nor, whether he might not manage differently from what their Master would do, if he were present. But, as Jesus had often told them before, that he did not himself come to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him,—that he had no separate interest of his own to seek, but did only what he had received commission from his Father to do,—and was coöperating with him in carrying out the purposes of his grace in the salvation of men ; so now, he assured them that this Paraclete, “the Spirit of truth,” who was to be their teacher and guide, would have no separate interest of his own to pursue, but would adhere strictly to the course which had been marked out for him (the Messiah) by his Father. *In this respect*, it would be as

*though* he was only a subordinate agent, obedient to the will of his superior, as the Messiah had been, and teaching only what he should "hear," or receive from God; i. e. *he would pursue the same course which Jesus had pursued.* In thus instructing them and rendering their efforts to extend his kingdom successful, Christ says: "He shall glorify me," the *Messiah* (as already explained); "for he shall *receive of mine*;—*λαμβάνει*, take the doctrine, or *truth* which appertains to my kingdom, "and shall show it unto you"—communicate it to you, as shall be needful. "All things that the Father hath are mine;"—my doctrine and that of the Father, appertaining to the mediatorial dispensation, are one and the same thing;—"therefore said I, that he shall take of mine,"—my doctrine,—*"and shall show it unto you."*

The Jews, and other Eastern nations, were very much in the habit of personifying *abstract truth* and *inexplicable fact*, and so of representing it as a real person. Something like this appears to be done here, in respect to that Divine illumination, aid, and comfort, which God, in his gracious dispensations, would impart to the apostles, as they went forth to their work. To interpret these expressions *literally*,—"he shall not speak of *himself*, but whatsoever he shall *hear*, that shall he speak,"—thus making the Spirit a *distinct* and *subordinate* agent, would be acting on *the very principle* which has led to the doctrines of eternal generation, eternal procession, and transubstantiation.

The passage in 1 John 5 : 7, 8, has been regarded by many persons, as clear and decisive evidence of the truth of the common theory of the Trinity: "For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth], the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." But that *part* of this passage which we have included in *brackets* is now generally regarded by critics, who have thoroughly investigated the subject, as *spurious*. Prof. Stuart says of it (as before quoted), that "if not *proved* to be *spurious*, it is at least thrown into a state so doubtful that no considerate inquirer would at present think of appealing to it as authority." Neander says, "it is undoubtedly *spurious*." Prof. Knapp expresses the same opinion.

Philip Limborch, a celebrated Professor of Divinity in Holland, of the Armenian persuasion, born at Amsterdam in 1643, wrote a book entitled, *Theologia Christiana*; of which there were four editions within thirty years from its first appearance, in 1686. In the first edition, now before us (4to., Amst., p. 102), he says he declines using the passage in question as a proof-text, "because it is wanting in many ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, as also in the Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic versions, by many of the fathers it was not acknowledged [as genuine], and many distinguished men contend that it is superfluous (*abundare*) in the text, and intruded by some human hand.

Mr. Barnes, in his commentary on the passage, gives

the result of an investigation of the subject ; and as it is a very good summary statement of the case, we shall introduce most of it to the attention of the reader. After omitting the contested part of it, which we have included in brackets, the passage will read thus : “ For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood ; and these three agree in one.” Mr. B. says : “ The reasons which seem to me to prove that the passage included in brackets is spurious, and should not be regarded as a part of the inspired writings, are briefly the following :

“ 1. It is wanting in all the earlier Greek manuscripts, for it is found in *no* Greek manuscript written before the sixteenth century. Indeed, it is found in only two Greek manuscripts of any age ; one the Codex Montfortianus, or Brittanicus, written in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the other the Codex Ravianus, which is a mere transcript of the text taken partly from the the third edition of Stephen’s New Testament, and partly from the Complutesian Polyglott. But it is incredible that a genuine passage of the New Testament should be wanting in *all* the early Greek manuscripts.

“ 2. It is wanting in the earliest versions, and, indeed, in a large part of the versions of the New Testament which have been made in all former times. It is wanting in both the Syriac versions—one of which was made probably in the first century ; in the Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, Ethiopic, and Arabic.

“ 3. It is never quoted by the Greek fathers in

their controversies on the doctrine of the Trinity—a passage which would be so much in point, and which could not have failed to be quoted if it were genuine ; and it is not referred to by the Latin fathers until the time of Vigilius, at the end of the fifth century. If the passage were believed to be genuine ; nay, if it were known at all to be in existence, and to have any probability in its favor, it is incredible that in all the controversies which occurred in regard to the Divine nature, and in all the efforts to define the doctrine of the Trinity, this passage should never have been referred to. But it never was ; for it must be plain to any one who examines the subject with an unbiased mind, that the passages which are relied on to prove that it was quoted by Athanasius, Cyprian, &c. (*Wetstein*, II., 725), are not taken from this place, and are not such as they would have made if they had been acquainted with this passage, and had designed to quote it.

“4. The argument against the passage from the external proof, is confirmed by internal evidence, which makes it *morally certain* that it cannot be genuine.

“(1.) The connection does not demand it. It does not contribute to advance what the apostle is saying, but breaks the thread of his argument entirely. He is speaking of certain things which bear ‘witness’ to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah ; certain things which were well known to those to whom he was writing—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. How does it contribute to strengthen the force of this, to say that *in heaven* there are ‘three that bear witness’—three

not before referred to, and having no connection with the matter under consideration ?

“(2.) The *language* is not such as John would use. He does, indeed, elsewhere use the term *Logos*, or Word (*ὁ λόγος*, John 1 : 1, 14 ; 1 John 1 : 1), but it is never in this form, ‘The Father, and the Word ;’ that is, the terms ‘*Father*’ and ‘*Word*’ are never used by him, or by any other sacred writers, as correlative.\* See 1 Jn. 1 : 3 ; 2 : 22, 23, 24 ; 4 : 14. 2 Jn. 3, 9, and the Gospel of John, *passim*. Besides ; the correlative of the term *Logos*, or *Word*, with John, is not *Father*, but *God*. See John 1 : 1 ; Comp. Rev. 19 : 13.

“(3.) Without this passage the sense of the argument is clear and appropriate. There are three, says John, which bear witness that Jesus is the Messiah. These are referred to in verse 6, and in immediate connection with this, in the argument (v. 8), it is affirmed that their testimony goes to one point and is harmonious. To say that there are other witnesses elsewhere ; to say that they are one, contributes nothing to illustrate the nature of the testimony of these three—the water, and the blood, and the Spirit ; and the internal sense of the

\* Good evidence this, by the way, of the *unsoundness* of that argument or statement which substitutes *Logos* for *Son*, in the passages which speak of God as creating all things “by his Son,” or “by Christ ;” as mentioned in the preceding chapters of this work. He created all things “by (on account of) his Son” the *Messiah*, but not by the *Logos*. The *Father* and the *Logos* “are never so used by him (John), or by any other sacred writers.”

passage, therefore, furnishes as little evidence of its genuineness as the external proof.

“5. It is easy to imagine how the passage found a place in the New Testament. It was at first written, perhaps, in the margin of some Latin manuscript, as expressing the belief of the writer of what was true in heaven, as well as on earth, and with no more intention to deceive than we have when we make a marginal note in a book. Some transcriber copied it into the body of the text, perhaps with a sincere belief that it was a genuine passage, omitted by accident; and then it became too important a passage in the argument for the Trinity, ever to be displaced but by the most clear critical evidence. It was rendered into Greek, and inserted in one Greek manuscript of the sixteenth century, while it was wanting in all the earlier manuscripts.

“6. The passage is now omitted in the best editions of the Greek Testament, and regarded as spurious by the ablest critics. See *Griesbach* and *Hahn*. On the whole, therefore, the evidence seems to me to be clear that this passage is not a genuine portion of the inspired writings, and should not be appealed to in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity.”\*

The passage in Isa. 53: 10-12, has been very extensively understood to favor the common theory of the

\* See also Mill. N. Test., pp. 379-386; Wetstein, II. 721-727; Father Simon, Crit. Hist. N. Test.; Michaelis, Introd. N. Test., IV. 412, seq., et al.

Trinity, inasmuch as it is supposed, in connection with Ps. 40 : 7, 8, and John 14 : 26 ; 15 : 26 ; 16 : 7, to give an account of a transaction in eternity, technically called "the Covenant of Redemption." The *first* named passage is here given in the language of Lowth's translation, which is regarded as expressing the sense of the original with greater accuracy than that of the common version.

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction. If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice, he shall see a seed which shall prolong their days, and the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands. Of the travail of his soul he shall see [the fruit], and be satisfied ; by the knowledge of him shall my servant justify many ; for the punishment of their iniquities shall he bear. Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his portion ; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil ; because he poured his soul out unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors ; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

The purport of this passage has been understood to be that the first Person in the Trinity, the *Father*, proposed to the second Person, the *Son in eternity*, to undertake the future redemption of man, by assuming human nature and dying on the cross ; with the promise of a rich reward for so doing. The acceptance of this proposal by the eternal Son, or the Logos, has been supposed to be recorded in Ps. 40 : 7, 8, (quoted in Heb. 10 : 7), "Then said I, Lo, I come : in the



volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart." To the transaction thus far described, as having taken place in eternity, some add that the first and second Persons of the Trinity proposed to the third Person, the *Holy Spirit*, to undertake the work of sanctifying men ; and he accepted the proposal, and made the engagement accordingly. This is supposed to be intimated in the passages referred to above, in the Gospel of John. Thus the Father sent the Son, and these two Persons united in sending the Holy Spirit, who "proceeded" from them both. This transaction, supposed to have taken place in eternity, between the several Persons of the Trinity, is what is denominated *the Covenant of Redemption*.

But it seems almost incredible that such a theory should ever have been made out from such premises ; and especially that it should have been claimed as actually *taught* in such passages as those just cited. If the imagination is to be allowed such a range as this in making out the meaning of Scripture, there is hardly any visionary absurdity which cannot claim—and with a very good grace—to have the support of revelation ; nay, to be actually *taught* there. Such visionary absurdity only follows in the track marked out for it by the principles of interpretation adopted in forming the *theories* of a scholastic trinity, the covenant of redemption, eternal generation, eternal procession, and transubstantiation.

The passage in Isaiah has always been understood,

both by Jewish and Christian expositors, to relate to the Messiah. It is evidently a prophetic account of his humiliation, sufferings and death, and of their happy and glorious results. It begins with the declaration that "it pleased Jehovah" to afflict him, just as it has "pleased" him to afflict his people, in one way or another, in all ages of the world. It declares that *if* or *when* he "shall make a propitiatory sacrifice" of himself, he shall witness, in its happy results, the eternal salvation of multitudes of the human race; that "the gracious purpose of Jehovah," with respect to the salvation of men, would "prosper" through his mediation; that he would "be satisfied," in beholding the abundant fruit of his sufferings; and that by a practical "knowledge" of the Messiah, multitudes would be "justified," or *treated as righteous*; for, by his mediation, he would remove their exposure to the punishment due to their sins. The Messiah having thus, in prophetic vision, completed the spiritual conquest of the world, a rich reward is promised him, in language appropriate to him as a conquering prince, and taken from the ancient custom of distributing the spoils of victory after the battle is over; declaring that this is done "because" he submitted to great degradation and suffering,—to the very death of the cross,—allowing himself to be "numbered with the transgressors," or *regarded and treated as were those who suffered justly as malefactors*.

This appears to be the plain, general import of the passage before us. If so, what is there in it which

has even the remotest appearance of a *proposal* to the *Son in eternity* to undertake the work of man's redemption? Nothing of this appears there. But it discloses "the gracious purpose of Jehovah," formed in eternity, relative to the salvation of men, the coming of the Messiah for the accomplishment of the object, and its glorious results.

The passage in the 40th Psalm, quoted in the 10th of Hebrews, evidently has no reference to the *Divine nature* of the Messiah, the *Logos*, uttering this language before the incarnation, and addressing God as "*my God*." Neither the plain import of the passage itself, nor the common sense of men, gives any countenance to such an interpretation. The passage is obviously to be understood as a prophetic anticipation of what the Messiah would *virtually* say while he was engaged in his mission among men, and as the real import of *what he did*, in his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross: "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Here and everywhere his language *virtually* is, "Lo ! I come, O God, to do thy will." "In the volume of the book it is written concerning me"—"the rites of the ceremonial law, recorded in the ancient Scriptures, set forth my work and sufferings as the Messiah." This appears to be the natural and proper import of the passage now under consideration.

The other passages referred to in the Gospel of John, relative to the part which—it has been supposed—the Holy Spirit covenanted to perform in the work

of redemption, have already been examined. The purport of them is, that from the Father's sending his Son to perform the work of mediation, and the Messiah's actual performance of the work assigned him—that from *these* as a *preparation* (actual or prospective), the Holy Spirit “proceedeth” in the all-important work of sanctifying and saving men.

That such a transaction between the several Persons of the Trinity, possessing *one set* of Divine attributes *in common*, and these “numerically the same,” should have been actually performed, is a “notion” too palpably absurd to be entertained for a moment. But the form in which this view is supposed to be held, where it is held at all, is, that it was a covenant transaction between three distinct and competent Divine agents, each with his own proper Divine attributes. This, however, in the view of that common sense of men to which the Scriptures are addressed, is nothing less and nothing else than pure tritheism; notwithstanding the disclaimer of intentionally so representing or holding it; and in the absence of all explicit revelation to that effect, it cannot properly be received as the truth, in opposition to one great, leading, all-pervading truth of the Scriptures.

These are all the passages which it is considered important to examine, in this connection, on account of their special bearing upon the general subject. It is so regarded, because there are but *two great principles* of interpretation, in accordance with one or the other of which such passages will be understood by

those who hold to the Supreme Divinity of the Son and Spirit. The *former* of these principles is contained in the common *theory* of the Trinity. Seen through this *scholastic medium*, these passages have mainly one complexion—one import—"tripersonality in the *nature* of God." The *latter* of these principles is contained in the great, leading truth of revelation, that there is but "one Jehovah"—"one God," as the subject is viewed by the unperturbed common sense of men. Those who deny the real "Divinity of Christ," and say,—“It may mean that he was Jehovah, the only living and true God ; in that case, the proper expression would be, that we do not believe in the Deity of Christ ;”<sup>\*</sup>—*such* persons may reject both of these principles. But the passage just quoted, *may* have been spoken in reference to the *common theory* of the Trinity, and not at all in reference to the *latter principle*, as here applied to the interpretation of these passages. This principle is not a *theory* ; any more than the declaration, that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” is a theory. A *fact*, or a *revealed truth*, is not a *theory*. On this latter principle,—by those who receive it,—the whole class of passages in question will naturally be understood in substantial accordance with that view of them which has here been presented.

<sup>\*</sup> Rev. G. W. Burnap's Discourses on *Popular Objections to Unitarian Christianity* ; p. 31.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

IN the preceding chapters, we have considered the subject of the Godhead as revealed to man—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We have examined the common theory of the Trinity in its Monotheistic and Tritheistic forms, and the main arguments by which these have commonly been defended ; and have spoken of the sufficiency of the word of God itself, without the aid of scholastic philosophy, to sustain the truth which he has been pleased to reveal to man. We have also examined some additional passages of Scripture, which have been claimed as teaching or implying the truth of the common theory. A few miscellaneous matters remain to be considered, before bringing this discussion to a close.

Notwithstanding this *theory* has been so long and so extensively held among the professed disciples of Christ, there have been many, in various ages, from its first adoption down to the present time, who did not receive it as *Divine truth* ; while yet, so far as appears, *many*

of *these* have manifested as much real attachment to *the word of God* as their opponents. For a period of years, as we have before had occasion to observe, one party prevailed for some time, and then the other. Nor does it appear that those who held to this theory acted more in accordance with the principles or possessed more of the spirit of the gospel, than many who rejected it. Intolerance was, indeed, the spirit of the age; but not therefore justifiable. The reception of their *scholastic views* of Divine truth was thought to be necessary, in order to salvation. Those views—the *costume* in which they presented revealed truth—they, without doubt, honestly regarded as a part of that which was actually revealed; but they did not concede to *others* that *right of private judgment* in the interpretation of the Scriptures, which they claimed for themselves. It was exercised by them at their own peril.

As a matter of curiosity to some, and of convenience to others, we here present those ancient formulas of faith, which are frequently denominated, *The Three Creeds*. The earliest of these is doubtless that which is called *The Apostles' Creed*; not because it was supposed to have been drawn up by the apostles, but because it was regarded as embodying the great truths which they taught.

## THE APOSTLES' CREED.\*

"I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth ; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ; he descended into hell ; the third day he arose again from the dead ; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty ; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy catholic Church ; the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen."

The *Nicene Creed* is so called, because it was adopted by the general Council at Nice, in the year 325. It was "designed to be thenceforward the only standard of orthodoxy." But the general Council held at Constantinople, in the year 381, made some *addition* to this formula ; which is here inserted, and included *in brackets*. We give the whole from the original Greek, in Knapp's Theology, p. 154.

\* *The Book of Common Prayer* : Oxford, 1781.



## THE NICENE CREED.

“ We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of the same substance with the Father; by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down, and became flesh, and was in human condition, suffered, and rose the third day, ascended into the heavens, and is coming to judge the living and the dead: and in the Holy Ghost [the Lord, the giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets]. But those who say, that there was a time when he (the Son) did not exist, and that before he was begotten he did not exist, and who say that he was made of nothing, or of another substance or being, or that the Son of God was created, modified, or transformed,—the whole Church anathematizes.”

The *Athanasian Creed* was of later date. It was not drawn up by him whose name it bears; but it was written originally in Latin, some time after his death, and was accepted as embodying the results of those

protracted controversies in which Athanasius was engaged, stating and defining the doctrines for which that distinguished father so long contended. It may be regarded as the Creed of the Western fathers, as the Nicene Creed was of the Greek or Eastern fathers.

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED.\*

*“ Quicumque vult.*

“ Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled ; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this :

“ That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity ; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one ; the glory equal, the majesty coëternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal ;

\* *The Book of Common Prayer ; Oxford, 1781.*

## THE NICENE CREED.

"We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things both visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of the same substance with the Father; by whom all things were made, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down, and became flesh, and was in human condition, suffered, and rose the third day, ascended into the heavens, and is coming to judge the living and the dead: and in the Holy Ghost [the Lord, the giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. But those who say, that there was a time when he (the Son) did not exist, and that before he was begotten he did not exist, and who say that he was made of nothing, or of another substance or being, or that the Son of God was created, *condemned* the Church anathema—

Jesus Christ, the  
of the substance of  
; and man of  
the world ; perfect  
soul, and human  
as touching his  
as touching his  
and man, yet he  
not by the conversion  
by taking of the man-  
not by confusion of  
on. For, as the rea-  
; so God and man is  
our salvation, descended  
day from the dead ; he  
from the right hand of the  
whence he shall come to  
lead. At whose coming, all  
their bodies, and shall give  
works. And they that have  
everlasting ; and they that  
ting fire.  
faith ; which except a man  
not be saved."

—the costume, and such the  
which the truths of revela-  
one early the church. Nor  
with the Both the lan-

and yet they are not three eternal; but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible: so likewise, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty; and yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the catholic religion, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity, none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons are coëternal together, and coëqual. So that in all things, as is afore said, the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

“Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we

believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man ; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds ; and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world ; perfect God, and perfect man ; of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting ; equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood ; who, although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ ; one, not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God ; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person. For, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man ; so God and man is one Christ ; who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead ; he ascended into heaven, sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God almighty ; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming, all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting ; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

“ This is the catholic faith ; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.”

Such is the language—the costume, and such the spirit of toleration, in which the great truths of revelation were held in those early ages of the church. Nor did they *originate* with these Creeds. Both the lan-

guage and the philosophy in which these truths are here presented, were of an earlier date, and were similarly held by many of the Ante-Nicene fathers, and doubtless introduced gradually, in accordance with the prevalent philosophy of the age, some time in the second century. Having been long employed with different degrees of precision and formality, this philosophical language had come to be held by a large proportion of the fathers, as sacred ; and it was at length, in times of earnest controversy, embodied in the two latter creeds, especially the last, with the utmost precision and accuracy. Thus embodied, it has been held, more or less generally, as *orthodox* ; i. e. it was *considered* to be *in accordance with the Scriptures*. Hence it came to be regarded as sacred and inviolable ; possessing authority equal at least to that of the Scriptures ; and it was the rule of judging of soundness in the faith. The great effort seems to have been, not simply to maintain *what the Bible really and plainly teaches* ; but also, THOSE SCHOLASTIC FORMS of language and of doctrine ; as though *Bible truth* could not *otherwise* be maintained. The two things came to be held as *one* and *inseparable*.

It is interesting to observe, how the doctrine of the Trinity was preached in England, two centuries and a half ago. For this purpose, we shall introduce a few paragraphs from a work of *Samuel Otes*, of Corpus College, Cambridge, and rector of Marsham and South Keppes, in Norfolk ; who died about the beginning of

the seventeenth century.\* His "Exposition of the General Epistle of Saint Jude" was "preached in a weekly lecture to a public audience on the market day, at Northwalsham in Norfolk." Some time after his death, it was published by his son, Samuel Otes, in 1633; fol. The lectures are without date; except as it is incidentally mentioned, that the *forty-first* was preached in 1602. "The market day" at that time was on the *Sabbath*; for the accommodation of the people. That practice was gradually discontinued; and in the time of Charles II., 1667, markets on that day were prohibited.†

These extracts are from the *third* sermon upon the *first* verse of Jude. The preacher says:

"For all our sanctification and holiness is from the Lord, as it appeareth plainly by the words of my text; *Sanctified of God the Father: Causa efficiens sanctitatis*; the efficient cause of holiness is God the Father: *Instrumentalis causa fides*; the instrumental cause is faith; for *Fides cor purificat*, faith purifieth the heart. *Materialis causa*, the material cause, *est energia sanctitatis quæ est in Christo*, for of his fullness we have all received, even grace for grace. *Formalis causa*, the formal cause, *est nostra renovatio ab impuris qualitatibus ad puras et integras*, is our renewing from impure qualities to pure and sound: *Finalis, Dei cultus*, the final, God's worship, to the honor of God and the edifying of our neighbor.

\* Bibliotheca Brit.; Otes.    † Penny Cyclop.; Markets.



“ But yet observe with me, that though sanctification be attributed to the Father, yet the Son, and the Holy Ghost are not excluded ; for we hold the principle of the schoolmen, *opera Trinitatis quoad extra sunt indivisa* ; the outward works of God are common to the whole Trinity ; and so are we sanctified by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; yet sanctification is here ascribed to the Father, as being the ground and first author thereof. For the Son sanctifieth by meriting sanctification ; the Holy Ghost sanctifieth by working it ; but the Father sanctifieth, both by sending his Son to merit it, and also by giving the Holy Spirit to work it. Thus *opera Trinitatis*, the outward works of God are common to the whole Trinity. *Sed opera Trinitatis quoad intus est singularia* ; the inward works of God are singular, and proper to some Persons of the Trinity : *ut patri potentia, filio redemptio, spiritu sanctificatio tribuitur* ; as power is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, sanctification to the Holy Ghost ; and yet these *now and then* be attributed to all three Persons. *Quod Ursinus ; servato ordine agendi*, for as the Father and the Holy Ghost do redeem, and yet mediately by the Son ; so the Father and the Son do sanctify, yet mediately by the Holy Ghost. The proper or incommunicable works of the Trinity are the inward eternal and hypostatical properties ; as thus : *pater generat*, the Father begetteth, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth ; and yet the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Ghost either Father or Son. The other works of the

Trinity are indivisible, howsoever sometimes distinct; as creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, sanctification to the Holy Ghost. Peter Martyr saith thus: *Pater ut fons, filius ut flumen, spiritus ut rivus ab utroque procedens*; the Father as the fountain, the Son as the flood, the Spirit as the river proceeding from both. The fountain is not the flood, nor the flood the fountain, nor the river either fountain or flood; and yet all these be *one water*. So the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Spirit either Father or Son, and yet but one God. *Et hi tres sanctificant*, and all these three sanctify; quoth Lactantius. *Ab uno omnia, per unum omnia, a quo, per quem, in quo omnia, unus a se, unus ab uno, unus ab ambobus, una tamen et eadem operatio*: all things from one, all things by one, all things in one; from whom, by whom, and in whom are all things; one of himself, one from one, one from both, and yet one and the same operation. *Tres sunt in trinitate, non statu, sed ordine; non essentia, sed forma; non protestate, sed specie; unus status, essentiæ et protestatis, quia sunt unus Deus*. There be three Persons in the Trinity, not in state and condition, but in order; not in essence, but in form; not in power, but in kind; for there is one and the same state of essence and power, because these three Persons be but one God.

“But to leave this: The Persons of the Trinity are here distinguished; they are sanctified of God the Father, and reserved unto Jesus Christ. The Persons of the Father and the Son are discerned [distinguished],

as in all other places : *Pater quasi fons exuberans ; filius ut rivus defluens ; ille ut sol, hic ut radius ; ille ut os, hic ut vox procedens : non autem separantur, sicut nec rivus a fonte, nec radius a sole, nec vox ab ore : quia aqua fontis est in rivo, et solis lumen in radio, et oris virtus in voce.* The Father as the fountain abounding, the Son as the river flowing ; he as the sun, this as the beam ; he as the mouth, this as the voice proceeding : they are not separated, as neither the river is separated from the fountain, nor the beam from the sun, nor the voice from the mouth ; for the water in the fountain is in the river, as the light of the sun is in the beam, and the virtue [power] of the mouth is in the voice.

“ The distinction of the Persons obscurely delivered in the Old Testament, in the New is made clearer than the noon-day. For at the baptism of Christ, the Son was seen ; the Holy Ghost descended like a dove. Again : Christ had them baptize, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Again : This was Paul’s farewell to the churches : *The grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.* Again : Saint John saith, *That there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* Also the place, Luke 1 : 35 : *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God ;* doth sufficiently prove the

Trinity ; which places, the Confession of Belgia quoted against Jews, Mahometans, Marcion, Mans, Sabellius, Somositanus," etc. (pp. 32-34.)

The author of this *Exposition* was an able man, as the whole work shows, and distinguished in his day ; and these representations of the Trinity may be regarded as a fair specimen of the form in which it was then held by intelligent men. How much they aid us in bringing forth to the light what the Scriptures have left in the dark, and in understanding what is *not revealed* of the Godhead, the reader can judge. The great outlines of the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity are there, the Supreme Divinity of the Father, Son, and Spirit ; but the filling up is from the Athanasian Creed, under the guidance of the imagination ; and the costume is scholastic. Some of the illustrations, however, hardly comport with the idea of the *supreme* Divinity of the Son and the Spirit. Though the *fountain*, the *flood*, and the *river* "be *one water*," yet the latter two are *derived* from the former *one*. But there is no doubt this author, in common with many others, thought he saw enough in the Scriptures to justify the representations which he made of the Trinity ; just

"As learned Commentators view  
In *Homer*, more than *Homer* knew."

The Rev. *Samuel Willard*, "of the South Church," Boston, Mass., and President of Harvard College, Cambridge, delivered a course of Lectures—two hundred and fifty in number—on *The Assembly's Shorter*

*Catechism.* Some years after his death these were published (4to. 1726), with a Preface, by the Revs. Joseph Sewall and Thomas Prince, pastors of the same church, under the title of *Body of Divinity*; which work contains a very complete view of the doctrine of the New England churches, at the time in which the author lived. Mr. Willard was a learned, eminent, and most influential divine, whose writings were received with great respect. Speaking of the *Trinity*, he says (pp. 97-101):

“The Divine allsufficiency displays itself unto us in God’s essences and subsistences.” (He had already treated of the Divine *unity*.) “This one is *three*. The doctrine of three Persons in the unity of the Divine essence is one of the great mysteries of religion, and beyond the comprehension of the human understanding.”

“1. In the Divine essence there are certain Divine subsistences. . . . Though there be but one God, that one God subsists in a diverse manner. . . . He is *three*; not three Gods, but three manners of being are in this one God.”

“2. These subsistences are distinguished from the essence, as the relation of a being is from the being itself. . . . A relation is less than an essence. . . . A man differs modally from himself considered as a *man*, and as a *master*, and as a *servant*; which, though it be but a dark resemblance to this great truth, yet it is such as God accommodates us with. Thus, then, though God the Father be God, yet he is

not Father as he is God, but as he begets the Son. Hence, these relations are assigned to him in the concrete, and not in the abstract."

"3. These subsistences are significantly called Persons. . . . Person in our account is an individual subsistence of a rational being."

Prof. *John Wollebius*, of Basle, in Switzerland, in his *Compendium of Christian Theology*, which was used as a classic in Harvard College, in 1776, makes the following statement on the same subject: "The Persons of the Deity are subsistences, any one of which has the whole essence of God; nevertheless differing in incommunicable properties.\* Further, from *Willard*.

"4. A Divine person may be thus described: It is the Divine essence subsisting under an individual relative property.

"Here are three things:

"(1.) That the *essence* and *subsistence* go together to constitute a *Divine person*. Subsistence adds to substance its individuation, or its distinct manner of being." [Save the *metaphysical terms*, and the *assumption* that all this is included in the *Divine nature itself*,—a grave matter for human philosophy to assume,—how does this representation of *Person* differ from that given at the beginning of the second chapter of this work?—*the Being himself and his manifestation*.]

\* Personæ Deitatis sunt subsistentiæ, quarum quælibet essentiam Dei totam habet, proprietatibus interim incommunicabilibus differentes. Londoni: 1750, p. 13.

"(2.) These subsistences are so many several relations of the Godhead to itself."

"(3.) Not a relation alone, but a relative property denotes a Divine Person. It must be a particular individuating relation. It must be proper to this Person, and distinguish him from the other Persons; and therefore it must not be that which is common to more than one."

"They (the three Persons) are equal in operation: all the works of efficiency are done by them jointly. They are all the works of God, flowing from the essence, which they are all concerned in: all three made the world."

In like manner, Dr. Woods says (*Works*, v. 1, pp. 41, 42): "Divine works generally belong in common to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and yet there are *official* works, as we may call them, which belong, not *exclusively* indeed, but in a *special manner*, to one of the Three. *God*, absolutely considered, sanctifies; the Father sanctifies; the Son sanctifies; but the work belongs in a *peculiar* sense to the Holy Spirit."

"There is one important exception. The work of making atonement for sin, and all that Christ did in his human nature, belong to him *exclusively*." "The *practical* view is attended with far less difficulty than the *speculative* view."

"God *absolutely* considered"—what is that? Is it God acting as *moral governor simply*, i. e. God as he is revealed to the angels, or as he was revealed to Adam

before his fall, who sanctifies men? Such is not the God who is revealed to *man*; for, since the "first father's fall," the God so revealed is "God in Christ." Is it God "without restriction, limitation, or reference" to any of his manifestations to men—is *this* "God absolutely considered?" The *revealed* Sanctifier of men is a different Being from this. Is it the *true God himself*, manifesting himself variously and under different names, as Jehovah, God,—the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, "one of the Three," but more commonly the *last*,—or under some other name by which he is called, who is the Sanctifier of men? This is exactly the view of the subject which has been presented in the foregoing pages.

But, instead of saying that "the *outward* works of God are common to the whole Trinity, but the *inward works* of God are singular [belong to different Divine agents]—the eternal and hypostatical *properties*" of each Person; that "all the works of efficiency are done by them jointly,—flowing from the Divine essence,—all three made the world;" and that "Divine works generally belong in common to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" (not to add, "which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved;")—instead of so representing the matter, how much more simple and natural is the way in which the Scriptures speak on these subjects? Which is *Divine teaching*, and which is *human philosophy*? No wonder that "the *practical* view is attended with far less difficulty than the *speculative* view." The former is given in the Bible,



for practical purposes ; the latter is furnished by the schools, with endless contention.

“ Dr. Jeremiah Taylor says, “ that he who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man’s invention, talking of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, priorities and coëqualities, &c., and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself and *build a tabernacle in his head*, and talk of something he knows not what ; but the good man, that feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is shed abroad, *this* man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet *he alone truly understands the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.*”\*

Are we, then, under obligation to regard this ancient scholastic philosophy of the Trinity as sacred and inviolable, because it has been so long *associated* in the pious mind with the most sacred truths of revelation, and furnished the costume in which they have been presented ? If not in accordance with the Scriptures, interpreted by that common sense of men to which they are addressed, why should this philosophy be regarded as *true*, any more than the ancient scholastic philosophy of the *human mind* ? Much of this latter philosophy, particularly “ the doctrine of *ideas*, which had kept possession of the schools for upward of two thousand years,” Decartes refuted. In this empire of Meta-

\* Doddridge’s Lectures, p. 403.

physics, notwithstanding the efforts which were made to resist it, the Cartesian philosophy "soon obtained possession of the schools, and drove Aristotle from the throne."\* The new philosophy, however, contained some absurdities, "such as his (Decartes') *vortices* and *innate ideas*," which soon shared the same fate from "the cautious and sensible system of Locke, who rejected what was false, or unwarranted, and retained, explained, and amplified what was useful." Then followed Reid and Stewart in a similar manner. Thus the real truth respecting the nature of the human mind and its impressions and operations was gradually brought to light, and "the barbarous language of the scholastic learning" laid aside. That *false philosophy* did not alter the *truth*; nor did the discovery and rejection of the former do any injury to the latter. The human mind still exists and operates as it always has done; even when the science of mind was enveloped in the mists and absurdities of the scholastic learning. So, the planets retain their full dimensions, and move on in their respective orbits just as they always have done, notwithstanding the Copernican or true system of Astronomy has taken the place of that ancient system which represented all the heavenly bodies as revolving around the earth as its center. But it is always better—far better—that the truth itself *simply* should be received, on any subject, rather than erroneous views of it; even though very much of that truth be still re-

\* Edinb. Encyclopedia.

tained in the system. Especially is it so in respect to the great practical truths of revelation—truths which take hold on time, and which take hold on eternity.

But there is a very common notion which stands in the way of any material progress in theological science, so long as it is held and cherished. This is, that *no discoveries or improvements in Theology are to be expected*. That heavenly-minded man, Dr. John H. Rice, uttered a similar sentiment, in his sermon before the General Assembly at Philadelphia, some thirty years ago. But some men of far-reaching minds, as Robinson and Edwards, have thought differently.

“No discoveries or improvements in *Theology*”—this is ambiguous. The revelation *itself*, as it came from its Author, man will not be able to “improve;” nor will he “discover” what is not revealed of things unseen. Yet many think they *have* discovered in the unrevealed *nature* of God, something which lays a foundation for distinctions or distinct Persons there, furnishing “infinitely blessed society in the Divine mind.” Still, it is acknowledged to be “a mystery;” i. e. a thing *not revealed*. Yet they tell us, it may be revealed that there is such “a mystery,” though it is not explained. But this “*may be*” is no *proof* that it is *really so*; though it often seems to be regarded as a *sufficient* proof. If the soundness of this their conclusion is questioned, they immediately take refuge in thick darkness; whether this be an *improvement*, or not.

But in respect to Theology as a *human science*,

there is ample room for discoveries and improvements. There is no good reason for supposing that the Nicene and Athanasian fathers possessed theological science, philosophy, and language, in such perfection that we have nothing to do but to perpetuate their views and their language; any more than that Aristotle and his followers possessed the true philosophy of the human mind in such perfection, that to depart from it is wholly unwarrantable. The former had before them the *facts* made known in the *Scriptures*; the latter had before them the human *mind* and its *operations*. We have, in both these respects, the same facts or truths made known to us, in the same ways, with the additional benefit of subsequent investigations. As the fathers examined the *Scriptures*, and came to such results in doctrine as seemed to them most in accordance with truth, viewed in the light of their own philosophy; so should we, guided by common sense, examine the same *Scriptures* in the light of "our exegetical guide," and come to such results as accord strictly with revealed truth. Those fathers had not "the keys of the kingdom" given to them in such a sense as to justify them in saying of *their own views* of Divine truth—"which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." He who really believes in Christ as the true Messiah, *may* yet be saved, even though he should not receive the ancient scholastic philosophy of the Trinity; while *some* who receive it, and regard themselves in the fullest sense as "the children of the kingdom," *may* "be cast out."

If the reception of those scholastic views of the Trinity is to be regarded as indispensable to salvation, or to credible evidence of piety and sanity, or to the reputation of Biblical orthodoxy, or to the charity and fellowship of the brotherhood in any of these respects, what becomes of such men as *Richard Baxter* and *Isaac Watts*?—men whose names will be remembered with affection, with veneration, and with gratitude to God by his children, centuries after the names of their scrupulous rejecters shall have been forgotten; unless some signal act of bigotry should confer upon them that kind of earthly immortality which has fallen to the lot of the Pharisees of old. And how much does the favorable opinion of those persons deserve to be esteemed, whose charity and fellowship are so straitened and cramped by the spirit of caste, that even Jesus himself, if he did not sanction their scholastic views and conform to their settled practice, but thought fit to eat with publicans and sinners and without washing his hands, would *seem* to be regarded as unsound in the faith?

“Mr. *Baxter* seems, as some of the schoolmen did, to have thought the three Divine persons to be *one and the same God*, understanding, willing, and beloved by himself; or wisdom, power, and love; which he thinks illustrated by three *essential formalities* (as he calls them), in the soul of man, viz., vital active *power*, *intellect*, and *will*; and in the sun, *motion*, *light*, and *heat*.”\*

\* Doddridge's Lect., p. 402.

What shall we say of *Baxter*, if the common scholastic theory of the Trinity—either in one form or the other—is to be regarded as the only statement of the subject which is consistent with holding the vital truths of Christianity? He evidently discarded that *theory*, as being a true representation of the Trinity as taught in the Scriptures. The question is *not*, whether his representation of the subject is the best—the one most in accordance with the Scripture account of the matter; but, was his rejection of the common theory inconsistent with holding clearly and presenting distinctly and powerfully *the great, vital truths of Christianity*? Is there nothing of these in the writings of *Richard Baxter*,—which have been read by hundreds of thousands of persons with the greatest benefit, which are published so extensively and scattered so widely, like “leaves for the healing of the nations,” and which will undoubtedly be read with profit by increasing numbers from generation to generation? Let the multitudes who have from age to age been turned to God by reading his *Call to the Unconverted*, and the Christians everywhere who have been humbled, animated, comforted, strengthened by reading his *Saints’ Rest* and *Dying Thoughts*, give the answer.

“Dr. *Watts* maintained one supreme God dwelling in the human nature of Christ, which he supposes to have existed the first of all creatures; and speaks of the Divine *Logos*, as the *wisdom* of God, and the Holy Spirit, as the Divine power, or the influence and effect of it; which he says is a scriptural *Person*, i. e.

spoken of figuratively in Scripture under personal characters.”\*

It is well known that Dr. Watts, while yet in the meridian of life, rejected the common *theory* of the Trinity; not believing it to be taught in the word of God. Yet he received, with the simplicity of a child, whatever he believed that word to contain. His views are distinctly stated in some of his *Dissertations*. In one of them he says, among other things: “So far as our ideas of arithmetic and reason can reach, this seems to be a plain truth: ‘If one infinite spirit be one God, two or three infinite spirits must be two or three Gods.’ And though the patrons of this opinion suppose these three spirits to be so nearly united as to be called one God, *merely to avoid the charge of polytheism*, yet it must be granted that this one God must, then, be one complex infinite Being, or Spirit, made up of three single infinite beings or spirits; which is such a notion of the one true God as I think reason nor revelation will admit. And yet, if this were the true notion of the one God, *it is very strange that Scripture should not clearly and expressly reveal it.*”

He further says: “The common explication of the eternal generation of the Son, and eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, which was authorized in the Latin churches, *was derived down to us from the Popish schoolmen*; though it is now become a part of the established or orthodox

\* Doddridge's Lect., p. 403.

faith in most of the Protestant nations, because at the Reformation *they knew no better way to explain the doctrine of the sacred Trinity*. They contented themselves to say it was *incomprehensible*, and *thus forbid all further inquiries*." Just as it is said of distinctions, or distinct Persons in the *nature* of the Godhead itself.

In his solemn *Address to the Deity*, Dr. Watts poured out his soul before God, over this whole subject, in a manner which shows, most clearly, his reverence for the Holy Scriptures, his humility, his teachableness, his earnest desire to understand and receive all that God had taught. This *Address entire* is rarely to be met with, except in his voluminous works, which few can purchase. As it is directly in point, showing the views of a clear, discerning mind, though still somewhat in darkness, and the feelings of a sincere, devout, and humble Christian on this important subject, the whole of it, as published in the London quarto edition of his works, of 1810, vol. iv., pp. 670–673, will be here inserted.

The *title* which the editor prefixes to it is as follows : "The author's solemn Address to the great and ever-blessed God on a review of what he had written in the Trinitarian controversy, prefixed by him to some pieces on that subject, which it was not judged necessary to publish." But why so ? It was a part of his "Works." Why "*not judged necessary*," as well as to publish the Address itself ? Is the *Scripture* doctrine of the Trinity *afraid* of the *light* ? Is not God's truth, in the open field of fair, manly, and earnest dis-



cussion, stronger than anything which erring and sinful man can bring against it? Did not its Author intend that what he has *revealed* on the subject should be investigated, understood, and received on the authority of his own word; “that our faith should not stand in the *wisdom* of men, but in the *power* of God?” This very hush-up—this effort to keep out everything but darkness, betrays weakness and distrust. Divine truth needs no *such* aid.

But let us listen to the author’s

#### SOLEMN ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

“Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee concerning thy judgments. Permit me, O my God and Father, to plead with thee concerning the revelations of thy nature and thy grace, which are made in thy Gospel: And let me do it with all that humble reverence, and that holy awe of thy majesty, which becomes a creature in the presence of his God.

“Hast thou not, O Lord God almighty, hast thou not transacted thy Divine and important affairs among men by thy Son Jesus Christ, and by thy Holy Spirit? and hast thou not ordained that men should transact their highest and most momentous concerns with thee, by thy Son and by thy Spirit? Hast thou not, by the mouth of thy Son Jesus, required all that profess his religion to be washed with water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Is it not my duty then, to inquire, who or what are these sacred

names, and what they signify? Must I not know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ thy Son, whom thou hast sent, that I may fulfill all my respective duties toward thyself and thy Son, in hope of eternal life? Hath not thy Son himself appealed to thee in his last prayer, that eternal life depends upon this knowledge? And since thou hast made so much use of thy Holy Spirit in our religion, must I not have some knowledge of this thy Spirit also, that I may pay thee all these honors thou requirest from this Divine revelation?

“Hast thou not ascribed Divine names, and titles, and characters to thy Son and thy Holy Spirit, in thy word, as well as assumed them to thyself? And hast thou not appointed to them such glorious offices as cannot be executed without something of Divinity or true Godhead in them? And yet art not thou, and thou alone, the true God? How shall a poor weak creature be able to adjust and reconcile these clashing ideas, or to understand this mystery? Or must I believe and act blindfold, without understanding?

“Holy Father, thou knowest how firmly I believe, with all my soul, whatsoever thou hast plainly written and revealed in thy word. I believe thee to be the only true God, the supreme of beings, self-sufficient for thine own existence, and for all thy infinite affairs and transactions among thy creatures. I believe thy Son Jesus Christ to be all-sufficient for the glorious work of mediation between God and man, to which thou hast appointed him. I believe he is a man, in whom dwells

all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. I believe he is one with God ; he is God manifest in the flesh ; and that the man Jesus is so closely and inseparably united with the true and eternal Godhead, as to become one Person, even as a human soul and body make one man. I believe that this illustrious Person is hereby possessed of Divine dignity sufficient to make full atonement for the sins of men by his sufferings and death, even though sin be accounted an infinite evil ; and that he hath all-sufficient power to raise himself from the dead, to ascend to heaven, and fulfill the blessed works for which thou hast exalted him, and to govern and judge the world in thine own appointed time.

“ I believe also thy blessed Spirit hath almighty power and influence to do all thy will, to instruct men effectually in Divine truths, to change the hearts of fallen mankind from sin to holiness, to carry on thy work of illumination, sanctification, and consolation on the hearts of all thy children, and to bring them safe to the heavenly world. I yield myself up joyfully and thankfully to this method of thy salvation, as it is revealed in thy Gospel. But I acknowledge my darkness still. I want to have this wonderful doctrine of the all-sufficiency of thy Son and thy Spirit, for these Divine works, made a little plainer. May not thy humble creature be permitted to know what share they can have in thy Deity ? Is it a vain, sinful curiosity to desire to have this article in such a light, as may not diminish the eternal glory of the unity of the true God, nor of the supremacy of Thee, the Father of all ?

“ Hadst thou informed me, gracious Father, in any place of thy word, that this Divine doctrine is not to be understood by men, and yet they were required to believe it, I would have subdued all my curiosity to faith, and submitted my wandering and doubtful imaginations, as far as it was possible, to the holy and wise determinations of thy word. But I cannot find thou hast anywhere forbid me to understand it, or to make these inquiries. My conscience is the best natural light thou hast put within me, and since thou hast given me the Scriptures, my own conscience bids me search the Scriptures, to find out truth and eternal life. It bids me try all things, and hold fast that which is good. And thy own word, by the same expressions, encourages this holy practice. I have, therefore, been long searching into this Divine doctrine, that I may pay thee due honor with understanding. Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, whether he be one pure and simple being, or whether thou art a three-fold Deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“ Dear and blessed God ! hadst thou been pleased, in any one plain Scripture, to have informed me which of the different opinions about the Holy Trinity, among the contending parties of Christians, had been true, thou knowest with how much zeal, satisfaction, and joy my unbiased heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the Divine discovery. Hadst thou told me plainly, in any single text, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three real distinct Persons in thy Di-

vine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men, instead of Divine doctrine ; but I should have humbly and immediately accepted thy words, so far as it was possible for me to understand them, as the only rule of my faith. Or hadst thou been pleased to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out and with certainty infer this doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers, with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul.

“ Thou hast taught me, Holy Father, by thy prophets, that the way of holiness in the times of the Gospel, or under the kingdom of the Messiah, shall be a highway, a plain and easy path ; so that the wayfaring man, or the stranger, ‘ though a fool, shall not err therein.’ And thou hast called the poor and the ignorant, the mean and the foolish things of this world, to the knowledge of thyself and thy Son, and taught them to receive and partake of the salvation which thou hast provided. But how can such weak creatures ever take in so strange, so difficult, and so abstruse a doctrine as this, in the explication and defense whereof multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtilties and dispute, and endless mazes of darkness ? And can this strange and perplexing notion of three real Persons going to make

one true God, be so necessary and so important a part of that Christian doctrine, which, in the Old Testament and the New, is represented as so plain and so easy, even to the meanest understandings ?

“ O thou Searcher of hearts, who knowest all things, I appeal to thee concerning the sincerity of my inquiries into these discoveries of thy word. Thou knowest me, thou hast seen me, and hast tried my heart toward thee : If there be any lurking hypocrisy in my heart, any secret bias toward anything but truth, uncover it, O Father of lights, and banish it from my soul forever. If thine eye discovers the least spark of any criminal prejudice in any corner of my soul, extinguish it utterly, that I may not be led astray from the truth, in matters of such importance, by the least glance of error or mistake.

“ Thou art witness, O my God, with what constancy and care I have read and searched thy holy word, how early and late, by night and by day, I have been making these inquiries ; how frequently I have been seeking thee on my bended knees, and directing my humble address to thee, to enlighten my darkness, and to show me the meaning of thy word, that I may learn what I must believe, and what I must practice with regard to this doctrine, in order to please thee, and obtain eternal life.

“ Great God, who seest all things ! thou hast beheld what busy temptations have been often fluttering about my heart, to call it off from these laborious and difficult inquiries, and to give up thy word and thy Gospel as

an unintelligible book, and betake myself to the light of nature and reason; but thou hast been pleased by thy Divine power to scatter these temptations, and fix my heart and hope again upon that Savior and that eternal life which thou hast revealed in thy word, and proposed therein to our knowledge and our acceptance. Blessed be the name of my God, that has not suffered me to abandon the Gospel of his Son Jesus! And blessed be that Holy Spirit that has kept me attentive to the truth delivered in the Gospel, and inclined me to wait longer in my search of these Divine truths, under the hope of thy gracious illumination!

“I humbly call thee to witness, O my God, what a holy jealousy I ever wear about my heart, lest I should do the slightest dishonor to thy supreme Majesty, in any of my inquiries or determinations. Thou seest what a religious fear, and what a tender solicitude I maintain on my soul, lest I should think or speak anything to diminish the grandeurs and honors of thy Son Jesus, my dear Mediator, to whom I owe my everlasting hopes. Thou knowest how much afraid I am of speaking one word, which may be construed into a neglect of thy blessed Spirit, from whom I hope I am daily receiving happy influences of light and strength. Guard all the motions of my mind, O almighty God, against everything that borders upon these dangers. Forbid my thoughts to indulge, and forbid my pen to write one word, that should sink those grand ideas which belong to thyself, or thy Son, or thy Spirit. Forbid it, O my God, that I should ever be so un-

happy as to unglorify my Father, my Savior, or my Sanctifier, in any of my sentiments or expressions concerning them.

“Blessed and faithful God, hast thou not promised that the meek thou wilt guide in judgment, the meek thou wilt teach thy way? Hast thou not told us by Isaiah thy prophet, that thou wilt bring the blind by a way which they knew not, and wilt lead them in paths which they have not known? Hast thou not informed us by thy prophet Hosea, that if we follow on to know the Lord, then we shall know him? Hath not thy Son, our Savior, assured us, that our heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him? And is he not appointed to guide us into all truth? Have I not sought the gracious guidance of thy good Spirit continually? Am I not truly sensible of my own darkness and weakness, my dangerous prejudices on every side, and my utter insufficiency for my own conduct? Wilt thou leave such a poor creature bewildered among a thousand perplexities, which are raised by the various opinions and contrivances of men to explain thy Divine truth?

“Help me, heavenly Father, for I am quite tired and weary of these human explainings, so various and uncertain. When wilt thou explain it to me thyself, O my God, by the secret and certain dictates of thy Spirit according to the intimations of thy word? Nor let any pride of reason, nor any affectation of novelty, nor any criminal bias whatsoever, turn my heart aside from hearkening to these Divine dictates of thy word



and thy Spirit. Suffer not any of my native corruptions, nor the vanity of my imagination, to cast a mist over my eyes, while I am searching after the knowledge of thy mind and will, for my eternal salvation.

“I entreat, O most merciful Father, that thou wilt not suffer the remnant of my short life to be wasted in such endless wanderings, in quest of thee and thy Son Jesus, as a great part of my past days have been ; but let my sincere endeavors to know thee, in all the ways whereby thou hast discovered thyself in thy word, be crowned with such abundant success, that my soul being established in every needful truth by thy Holy Spirit, I may spend my remaining life according to the rules of thy Gospel, and may, with all the holy and happy creation, ascribe glory and honor, wisdom and power to Thee, who sittest upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.”

In this manner did that eminent servant of God pour out his whole heart over the subject. Rejecting the common theory with which his earlier devotional feelings had been associated, he was evidently often distressed ; partly from his own theory not being perfectly satisfactory to himself, and partly from the opposition which he knew his recent course and present views would meet with—which in fact they *did* meet with—from pious friends whom he respected and loved. From some of the views which he has elsewhere expressed, he seems to have had a glimpse of that simple view of the subject which the Bible gives without *any*

theory ; but *some* theory, as a mode of explanation, was deemed necessary, and was in accordance with previous habits, and with the spirit of the age.

As his piety was above suspicion, some persons have ascribed the Doctor's change of views on this subject, to insanity or imbecility. But such an explication of the matter, however good the motive may be in suggesting it, does no honor to religion. His personal friend, Dr. Gibbons, in reference to this very point, makes the following statement :

“ How it came to pass I know not, but that it has so happened is certain, that reports have been raised, propagated, and currently believed concerning the Doctor, that he has imagined such things concerning himself as would prove, if they were true, that he had lost possession of himself, or suffered a momentary eclipse of his intellectual faculties ; and I could refer my reader to a biographer who gives the world a grave narrative of the particulars of these wild reveries. But I take upon me, and feel myself happy to aver, that these reports were utterly and absolutely false and groundless ; and I do this from my own knowledge and observation of him for several years, and some of them the years of his decay, when he was at the weakest ; from the express declaration of Mr. Joseph Parker, his amanuensis for above twenty years, and who was in a manner ever with him ; and, above all, from Mrs. Elizabeth Abney, the surviving daughter of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney, who lived in the same family with him all the time of the Doctor's residence there, a

period of no less than thirty-six years. Can any evidence be more convincing and decisive?"

Dr. Watts was a man whose intellect is not to be despised, nor his piety or sincerity to be doubted. What Christian child has not been piously instructed by him? What humble believer in Jesus has not communed with him, and offered praise to God in his language? We heard the venerable Dr. Griffin, with all the glowing ardor of his mind, say of him many years ago on the floor of the General Assembly at Philadelphia,—particularly in reference to his Psalmody,—“Mr. Moderator—*there never was but ONE WATTS!*” Dr. Johnson, a High Churchman, says of him, in his *Lives of the Poets*: “The truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his incessant solicitude for souls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works; under his direction it may be truly said, *Theologiæ Philosophia ancillatur*, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason is on a sudden compelled to pray. . . . . He is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed, by his verses or his prose, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.”

Yet, learned and pious, and eminent as Dr. Watts

was for every virtue, such was the general state of feeling relative to the common or *scholastic theory*, at the time the foregoing Address was first published, that some of his friends, fearing it would greatly injure his popularity and influence, persuaded him to recall the edition,—which we are told consisted of only fifty copies, containing the Address prefixed to a treatise on the Trinity,—and commit it to the flames. What a fact this, in the history of that theory! This is the way in which it has come to pass, that “so the church has always understood the subject.” But how does such a proceeding differ, *in principle*, from suppressing or burning Protestant books in Catholic countries? It is not *Divine truth*, but a *scholastic theory*, that will not bear the light. But, in the good providence of God, *one* copy of that work of Watts escaped the flames; and half a century afterward, it was found in a bookstore at Southampton (1796); so that it can tell us of the workings of his inquisitive, anxious, humble and devout mind, on this great subject. And it does tell us, that he was driven to the verge of infidelity; from which, however, the grace of God—not that scholastic theory—preserved him.

But many are afraid of *light* on the subject, and are anxious to preserve this theory, lest men should become Unitarians or Infidels. This is just like the priestly method of preventing Catholics from becoming Protestants. So long as they can be kept quiet, in the belief of the infallibility of the Pope and the authority of the Priest over the conscience, there is

no danger—they will “believe what the church believes,” and obey the Priest; but as soon as any of them begin to inquire, read, and think on the subject, and to *doubt* of such infallibility and authority, they are at once considered—and not without reason—as lost to *that* church, and are doomed accordingly. So it is with reference to *scholastic views* of the Trinity. The only way to retain them is, to keep people in the dark—merge the subject in “awful mystery,” into which it is not lawful to inquire; and if any one should presume to do so, and to doubt of the correctness of such views, pronounce him at once “guilty of contempt of authority,” and “cast him out.” But Baxter and Watts could hold the *living truths* of Christianity, without this scholastic theory, and bring them, in love and with power, to bear upon the conscience and the heart. Why cannot others do the same? What *need* has God’s truth of scholastic mystery to protect it or give it efficacy?

But the manner in which this theory has commonly been presented and defended, has had great influence in promoting skepticism and infidelity; especially with those independent, thinking minds, who will not be restrained from examining into the subject, and who must, without reserve, receive this *theory*, or be regarded and treated as “heretics.” A sensible writer in *The New Englander* for Feb. 1850, p. 18, referring particularly to the *Tritheistic form* of this theory, says:

“This method of stating the doctrine of the Trinity

is particularly unfortunate, since it not only leads the mind that adopts it into unnecessary confusion, and even error, but by coming into direct and unavoidable collision with one of the plainest truths of revelation, the Divine unity, it *brings the doctrine itself into disrepute*, and in many instances occasions its entire rejection. It is a sad fact, yet one with which he who is conversant with the history of doctrines in the church is but too familiar, that in many cases, the *first sources* of the error and essential heresy which have arisen in the world, to the no small detriment of truth and the human mind, are to be found in the *injudicious and unreasonable statements and opinions* of those who have held the very opposite extreme. Thus unquestionably has it been in the present instance. Not a few have been led to reject the Divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity *in toto* [true indeed ; and so Dr. Watts, in the Preface to some of his Dissertations, says it was in his day, and had been before], as the only way of avoiding the *really irreconcilable contradictions* involved in the method of statement now under consideration. And this state of things *must continue*, so long as they who hold the doctrine allow themselves to use terms in this loose and incorrect manner ; applying to the distinctions in the Divine nature [?] the term Person in nearly or quite the *ordinary* sense of the word ; speaking and thinking of the Father, Son and Spirit, as if they were three distinct Beings, who together constitute the Deity, who consult together, and enjoy each other's

society and converse ; thus virtually abandoning the doctrine of the simple undivided unity of the Godhead, and, when pressed with the conflicting nature of these two things, *taking refuge as a last resort behind the broad shield of acknowledged MYSTERY.*"

This is very well said, in the main. But the writer of it seems not yet to have *wholly* dispensed with the use of scholastic glasses. Those which he wears occasionally seem *tinged* a little with "yellow ;" while the other view, which he opposes, comes through the darkest "indigo." He holds the *Monotheistic* form of the common theory,—“distinctions in the Divine nature itself,”—which is decidedly the least exceptionable of the two ; but still it goes *beyond the record*, and has, in some degree, the same effect of occasioning the rejection of important truths actually revealed, which he justly ascribes to the Tritheistic form which he opposes, and *refutes*. But he, too, “takes refuge behind the broad shield of *mystery*.” Let him look at the whole subject with the naked eye, and in the light of our common “exegetical guide,” and he will doubtless see it as it is, clearly revealed. He will then have no need of any other “shield,” but that broader, *safer* shield of Divine truth.

The question may be asked : *How it comes to pass*, that *such a multitude of believers have*, for so many ages, *received the common theory of the Trinity with confidence and joy as Divine verity*, if it is not really taught in the Scriptures ? The answer to this question has in part been given already, in what has been said

respecting the position, that "so the church has always understood the subject." Another reason is, that their public teaching and Confessions of Faith have led them to believe that this doctrine or theory of the Trinity, including "the eternal generation of the Son" and "the eternal procession of the Spirit," is "the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence upon him."\* In other words; it is because they have associated with that theory, *all the great and glorious truths of redemption*; and THESE REVEALED TRUTHS,—not the distinction of Persons in the very nature of the Godhead, in itself considered,—have been the real subject of their confidence and joy. But that theory is *not at all* necessary, to the *full* and *practical* reception of these truths. Paul, Baxter, and Watts so received and taught them, and a multitude of devout and humble Christians have so received them, *without that scholastic theory*. A vastly greater multitude would doubtless have so received them *openly*, but for the cogent reasons which have been mentioned in the foregoing discussion. These blessed truths may, indeed, be presented in connection with that theory; but without it, the same revealed truths appear far more plain, simple, natural, intelligible and scriptural, and comparatively free from perplexing embarrassments and inextricable difficulties. In both ways of presenting the subject, God is represented as having revealed himself to men as the Father,

\* *Savoy Confession*; and adopted in *Boston*, 1680.



Son, and Holy Ghost, and as acting in these several capacities and relations ; and the Being so revealed, and designated by *any one* of these names, is claimed to be the Supreme God ; whether we include under it, the whole Godhead, according to the teachings of the Bible ; or only an unknown distinction or a distinct Person in the same, according to the teachings of a superannuated and presumptuous philosophy.

No human language can adequately describe Him, whom we cannot find out by searching. In our imperfect descriptions and illustrations, and in the names employed to designate him, we can only use the language of approximation. The name *Father*, applied to God, by no means denotes *all* which is meant by that term, when applied to man. Were we to draw out its meaning, in the former case, in all the particulars which it denotes in the latter case, we should run into the most glaring absurdities. There are certain respects, in which it is appropriate ; and certain other respects, in which it is wholly inappropriate. *Bearing this in mind*, we might furnish *some* explanation of what we mean, in saying that the true God viewed in three aspects and relations and acting in three different capacities is one and the same Jehovah, by taking one or two *suggestive* illustrations.

That great moral and spiritual change which takes place when a man becomes a true believer in Jesus, is denominated *regeneration, repentance, faith* ; accord-

ing to its aspect and relation toward *God* as its author, toward *sin* as its subject, or toward *Christ crucified* as the object of trust. This whole change is often designated by any *one* of these terms ; though in different aspects and relations. If a person is truly regenerated by the Holy Spirit, he is a Christian. If he has truly repented of his sins, he is a Christian. If he has true faith in a crucified Savior, he is a Christian. So God, creating and governing the universe and making provision for the salvation of men, is the true God. The same God manifested in the flesh, dwelling in the Messiah, and in or through him reconciling the world unto himself, is the Supreme God. The same unchangeable Jehovah graciously carrying on his plan of mercy,—converting and sanctifying men, watching over and protecting his church, and promoting her welfare in all ages of the world,—is the true and eternal God. But in these several cases, he is presented to us in different aspects and relations, and acts in different capacities (*so much is true*, even if this is not the *whole* truth) ; yet all in perfect consistency with one another, and with the great principles of his government.

The *Supreme Magistrate* of the Commonwealth acts in very different capacities, when the public good requires it. In ordinary circumstances, he acts in a *civil* capacity in what he does with respect to the enactment and execution of the laws. In a time of hostile invasion especially, he is called to act in a *military* capacity, *suspending*, if need be, certain civil rights of the citizens. Again, in the exercise of the pardoning

power, he *revokes* the sentence of the law, instead of causing it or leaving it to be executed. These several capacities in which he acts are entirely consistent with each other and with the public good ; nay, he is *required* so to act for the common weal, on account of the *occasions* which called for the exercise of these diverse public functions. So likewise, the same Supreme God acts in the several capacities ascribed to him in the Scriptures, in entire harmony with his government, with the best interests of his great kingdom, and with the perfection of his whole character as Moral Governor of the universe.

These illustrations are merely *suggestive*, and most obviously, not to be taken in *every* respect as explanatory of what is revealed concerning God ; any more than the name *Father* or *King* when applied to him, is to be understood as meaning the same, in all respects, as when applied to a man : what is *not revealed* of God, we do not attempt to illustrate or explain at all. But, to set forth for argument or illustration—"George Washington as Proprietor of Mount Vernon, addressing a petition to George Washington as President of the United States, that he would send George Washington as Military Commander to defend his estate from pillage"\*—to set forth this as a fair, or even plausible illustration of the foregoing Biblical view of the Trinity, would (whether so intended or not) be the very extreme of caricature and absurdity. What in-

\* *Omicron* in the N. Y. Evangelist.

telligent and candid reasoner ever represented God as sending himself—and not rather his Son—to make atonement for sin? Who, that was not wedded to a troublesome theory, ever represented Him as offering a petition to himself, to sanctify men through his own truth and to take care of his church; and not rather, his Son the Messiah—the man Christ Jesus—as offering such a petition to God his Father? But it shows that the subject, thus unintentionally perverted and caricatured, is seen and perceived through a false medium, of the darkest hue. The foregoing alleged likeness resembles the original no more than a man of straw resembles a real son of Adam. It would be more honorable to deal with the original, the *real man*,—fairly to be sure,—than to demolish *him* of straw.

It is natural to inquire, whether the Trinity of the Scriptures is revealed in the *Old Testament*. The sum and substance of it are there; though it is not revealed as clearly and fully, as in the New Testament, after the incarnation; and, from the very nature of the case, it was not to be expected, even if possible. In the *former*, God is revealed as creator and righteous moral governor, and as having mercy in store for rebellious man; this is the *Father*. A Messiah to come, one to be offered up as a sacrifice for sin, is fully set forth in the Mosaic ritual, and plainly referred to and foretold in the Psalms and in the Prophets; this is the *Son* by anticipation—the manifestation of God in the flesh. God operated on the hearts of men,

and inclined them to himself; gave them a new heart and a new spirit; watched over, favored, and protected his ancient church amid all her trials;—this is the *Holy Spirit*. Here is, substantially, the Trinity as revealed in the New Testament.

But these facts by no means prove that there are three Persons in the nature of the Godhead itself; as has before been shown. Much *less* do they prove the truth of the common theory of the Trinity *so clearly*, that it must have been understood by the whole Hebrew nation, and that wherever any of them went and whoever came among them from heathen nations, *all* carried away with them a full knowledge of this trinity of Persons in the Godhead; so that the doctrine took everywhere, spread over heathendom, and was incorporated into all their systems of religion. Yet this has been often and strenuously maintained; and it has been regarded as *unanswerable* evidence, corroborating the truth of that theory.

Now, it does not belong to any of us to account for the origin of all the fanciful forms of heathen idolatry, or else to admit the truth or probability of any theory which may claim support from the *prevalence* of such idolatry. If the common theory is not taught in the Scriptures; and especially, if that form of idolatry which is claimed for its support, is directly contrary to one of the plainest truths set forth abundantly in the Book of God, and evidently designed to warn and guard us against the reception of more gods than one; then, we are not bound to account for its origin *satisfactorily*

to those who hold the theory, or else to admit that it corroborates such a theory. The light of nature no more teaches tritheism, in any form, than it does polytheism. Yet some theologians of a lively imagination, and others who have not examined the subject with *due care*, have thought they found the doctrine of the Trinity “evidently received, without a question, in all the four quarters of the globe.” But the facts respecting heathen idolatry, in connection with other facts, only prove that there is, in the nature of man, *a certain religious element*, which inclines him to worship *some* God. The heathen have worshiped *one* Jupiter, the father of the gods and men, three gods, and any number up to “thirty thousand gods;” and almost any other number. We are told, that “the people of Thibet, who are worshipers of Buddha, acknowledge the following trinity, viz. : 1. The Supreme God ; 2. The Divine Law ; and 3. The *created Universe*.” How has all this come to pass ? Plainly, because the heathen, prompted by the religious element in man and without Divine revelation, are led to worship more gods than one. It is exactly in keeping with heathen polytheism, and pantheism.

But the apostle Paul does not seem to have been acquainted with the prevalence among the heathen of any such great truth respecting God, at the time he wrote his letter to the Romans ; at least, he did not give them credit for it. He says of the Gentiles,—the heathen as a body,—that “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.” Yet here is *one* very

important, yea, *fundamental* truth respecting him,—a trinity in some form,—which they *did* “retain in their knowledge.” Though it was held in a corrupted form, yet, as held by *some* heathen philosophers, it was hardly more so, than the form in which it is held by some who have the Bible for their guide.

But while this apostle did not recognize any such traditionary knowledge or philosophy as prevalent among the heathen, respecting *God*; yet, in the seventh chapter to the Romans, he does recognize the prevalent philosophy respecting the nature of *man*, and adapts himself to it, that he might turn it to good account. Speaking of those opposite workings in man, which control the human conduct, he represents *two distinct and conflicting agents* as existing there, and struggling for the mastery; according to the prevalent philosophy. Cicero, who died but forty-three years before the Christian era, says in reference to the constitution of man: “There is a two-fold energy of the *mind*, and of *nature* [the physical man]: one part is situated in *appetite*, which in Greek is called *ὄρεσις*, which hurries the man hither and thither; the other in *reason*, which teaches and shows what ought to be done, and what ought to be avoided. Hence it is, that reason should govern, and appetite obey.”\* Here Cicero evidently recognizes two conflicting principles or agents

\* Duplex est enim vis animorum, atque naturæ: una pars in appetitu posita est, quæ est *ὄρεσις* Græce, quæ hominem huc et illuc rapit alter in ratione, quæ docet et explanat quid faciendum, fugiendum sit. Ita fit ut ratio præsit, appetitus obtemperit. Cic. de Offic. L. I. 28.

in man ; one put there to govern, the other to be governed, but yet is clamorous to have the control.

Nor was this philosophy peculiar to the Romans. We find it more distinctly stated by Xenophon (Cyrop. vi. 1), who represents Araspes, the Persian, as saying, in order to excuse his treasonable designs : “ Certainly I must have *two souls*, . . . for it is not one and the same which is both evil and good, . . . and at the same time wishes to do a thing and not to do it. Plainly then I must have *two souls* ; and when the *good* one prevails, then it does good ; and when the *evil* one predominates, then it does evil.” Epictetus, too, a *Stoic philosopher* of Hierapolis in Phrygia, says in his *Enchiridion* (II. 26) : “ He that sins, does not do what he would ; but what he would not, *that* he does.” This is almost the same language which the apostle uses in his letter to the Romans (7 : 15–25) : “ For that which I do, I allow [approve] not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I. For the good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” The apostle here personifies *sin* (ἡ ἀμαρτία), pointing out the physical nature as its exciting cause, according to the prevalent philosophy ; as though it were a *distinct agent*—another *self* ; denoting by it, the impulses, passions and affections which lead men to sin. He goes on to say, in substance, that *one* of these agents, reason, justifies and approves of the law of God ; but that *other* agent, the physical man, which he calls “ the flesh,” is ever



at war with its claims. Thus the contest goes on between these two opposing agents in man, whether a Christian or not. In view of this conflict in himself, the apostle exclaims : " O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " How am I—how is man to obtain the victory ? It is to be done, " I thank God, through " his grace in " Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the *mind* [the rational part] I myself [I the same person], serve the law of God ; but with the *flesh* [the physical part], the law of sin." Such is the use which he makes of the prevalent philosophy, presenting in accordance with it—in accordance with *fact*—most important truths, and showing the superior excellence and power of the gospel.

This apostle does the same thing in Gal. 5 : 16, *et seq.*, as in the foregoing passage : " This I say then, Walk in the *spirit* [*the mind*, in Romans—according to the *spiritual* or *rational part*], and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the *flesh* [*the other agent*]. For the *flesh* lusteth against the *spirit*, and the *spirit* against the *flesh* ; and these are *contrary* the one to the other [the same *conflict* as before] : so that ye cannot do [so that ye do not] the things that ye would." Here is a very striking resemblance to the passage in Romans ; but it is not to our purpose to dwell upon it.

While the apostle adopts the prevalent philosophy respecting man, as teaching important truth, and thus turns it to good account ; it does not appear that he makes any allusion whatever to a traditionary knowl-

edge of the Divine Trinity, prevalent among the heathen at that, or any other time. If it did really exist, it was a most important fact; and it is wholly unaccountable, that he should have taken no notice of it: for he might have used it to advantage; according to an important principle upon which he acted—"becoming all things to all men, that by all means he might save some." He might have told the Gentiles, that they had a traditionary knowledge of that very Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, which was more clearly revealed in the gospel which he preached; and he might have used it as a means of bringing them to a correct knowledge and reception of the truth. He *did* so, on other occasions. When he preached at Athens, certain persons encountered him, and accused him of being "a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them *Jesus* and the *resurrection*"—two "strange gods." He said to them: "As I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription; TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." He quoted likewise from some of their own poets: "For we are also his offspring." From these things which he found among them,—*favoring his object*,—he took occasion to preach the gospel to them, with plainness and fidelity; but he did not allude to any knowledge they had of the particular doctrine or theory in question. These things he did, *in the very country and city of Plato*; who held to a trinity not very different from that held by some of the early

Christian fathers ; yet, contrary to his usual practice in such favorable circumstances, the apostle *took no notice* of it. Writing to the Romans he says, indeed, that the heathen “are without excuse ;” because “the invisible things of” God have been discoverable ever since the creation, “by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” But he says nothing of this sort, respecting a Trinity.

There appears to be *no valid evidence*, that the idea of a Trinity of Persons *in God* was entertained by the early Hebrews, as a doctrine which they had received from revelation. Prof. Knapp says that “the learned Jews who lived *beyond the bounds of Palestine*,” had, a considerable time before the coming of Christ, “im-bibed many of the principles of the philosophy prevailing in the regions where they resided.” But he says also, that “these principles were *wholly unknown* to most of the Jews who lived *within the bounds of Palestine* during the lifetime of Christ, and afterwards. They were satisfied with their Pharisaic-rabbinic theology, and looked for the Messiah as a religious reformer, and a temporal king. . . . . It is among these learned Jews *out of Palestine* that the theory of the Logos is found as early as the first century. . . . . These opinions, derived partly from Grecian philosophy, and partly from Jewish and Christian theology, grew gradually in favor with *the more learned Christians* ; they were variously developed and modified by *the different parties* of the early Christian church ; until at length, in the fourth century [about the time

when the Nicene Creed was adopted], *one party obtained ascendancy for its own peculiar theory and phraseology, to the exclusion of all the rest.*"\*

The early Hebrews, then, and the Jews of Palestine did not find the common theory in the Old Testament ; "the devout Watts" could not find it, "in a single text ;" but Plato and the early Christian fathers *did* find it—somewhere. We conclude, therefore, that the heathen did not derive their tritheistic notions originally from ancient revelation ; but that the *common theory*—not the Trinity of the Scriptures—was derived from heathen philosophy.

This conclusion is *confirmed*, by the views expressed by some of the early Christian fathers. One of them, *Justin Martyr*, who was born in Flavia Neapolis, anciently Sychem a city of Samaria, about A. D. 90, was a *Platonist* until he was more than forty years of age. Of course, he lived about ten years during the lifetime of the apostle John. He became a Christian in the year 132. It was natural that he should carry some of his Platonic notions into Christianity, as the foreign learned Jews did, into Judaism. This he accordingly did. He says : " Those good men who lived before Jesus Christ, were in their circumstances Christians ; for all men who lived according to the seed of the Logos, lived *rationally* ; but, as the *universal Logos* is the same with Christ, they lived in a Christian manner, and are not unworthy of the name of

\* Theology, pp. 146-7.

**Christian.** Such were Socrates and Heraclites among the Greeks ; Abraham and others among the Jews." Justin went to Rome in the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius ; and suffered martyrdom in the year 164, in the seventy-fourth or seventy-fifth year of his age.

*Tertullian*, who was born at Carthage about the middle of the second century, says, that " God was before all alone ; being both world and place and everything to himself. Alone, because there is nothing exterior to him, and yet not indeed alone, because he had in himself his Reason : for God is rational, and reason was first in him, and this reason is his sensation. The Greeks term it Logos, which we translate Word, and thus our people, for brevity's sake, say, ' In the beginning the Word was with God ;' though it would be more proper to say *Reason*, since God was not speaking from the beginning ; although rational : and this he was, even before the beginning ; for the very word spoken, consisting of reason, shows the prior existence of this latter."

*Lactantius*, supposed to have been an African, lived in Nicomedia, in the time of Constantine, and died about the year 325. He says : " The Word is called Logos by the Greeks ; and this term is more appropriate than ours, because it signifies Reason, as well as Word. Now the Son of God is the Reason and Wisdom of his Father, as well as his word. This Divine Word has not been altogether unknown to the philosophers who knew nothing of Christianity. Zeno says

that it created the universe, and ranged the parts which compose it in due order."

*Augustin* was born at Tagaste in Africa, in 354, became bishop of Hyppo in 395, and died in 403. He says: "We believe, we maintain, we teach, as a dogma of our faith, that the Father has begotten the Word; that is to say, his Wisdom, the creator of all things." Again: "Now that which is affirmed of him without relation to another, is *that which he has*. Thus, as life in itself, and without relation, is affirmed of him, *he is the Life itself* which he has."

Who can doubt that the early Christian fathers derived their notions respecting the Trinity from heathen philosophy,—with which they correspond,—according to the custom of the age, both among Jews and Christians; especially as some of them entertained similar views of God, before their conversion to Christianity, and regarded some of those philosophers who lived before Christ, as Christians? And yet their views are to be taken as *Divine truth*!

But why call this a *Biblical Trinity*? The general reason is implied, in what has already been said on the foregoing pages. More particularly it is,

1. Because it presents *the simple view which the Bible gives* us of the one Jehovah, revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without any metaphysical theory as to the mode of his existence.

2. Because it maintains that the view which the Bible gives us, presents *all that we know* respecting God as revealed to man,—save what his works re-

veal,—and that his own testimony in the case furnishes *sufficient evidence* of the supreme Divinity of the Son and Spirit, *independently* of any human theory.

3. It is called a Biblical Trinity, in *distinction* from a *Scholastic Trinity* ; which claims the philosophy of the schools on this subject as a *part* of that which is to be received as *Divine truth*, and so far binding upon the conscience as to render its reception necessary, in order to an *equal share in the charity and fellowship of the brotherhood*.

Though this Biblical Trinity does not contain the common *theory*, yet to say that it lacks the *revealed* doctrine of the Trinity, would be speaking falsely. *So much* as is here set forth as revealed, is contained in the Scriptures ; even if *more* is revealed there. It includes all which the common theory is *mainly* designed to establish and defend ; viz., the supreme Divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Biblical Trinitarians maintain *these revealed truths* ; but they stop *short* of holding any theory as necessary to reconcile and defend them. Scholastic Trinitarians hold the same truths, more or less *modified* by scholastic theories and antique phraseology unwarrantably assumed as the only proper costume in which these truths have a right to appear, or be received. Biblical Trinitarians, on the other hand, do not believe that the early Christian fathers—worthy and venerable men in their day—were Divinely authorized to do all the thinking for the church down to the end of time, and to prescribe the only proper forms of language in which to

present Divine truth ; but they hold it to be the right and duty of every man to examine the Scriptures for himself, with the best helps he can obtain, and to receive as Divine truth whatever he finds there revealed ; allowing all others to enjoy the same sacred birth-right.

Nor does a Biblical Trinity, as set forth on the preceding pages, “*lean*” toward this or that *ism* ;—as some, who are not much given to thinking for themselves, and hence cannot or *do* not discriminate, are apt to say, in order to cast opprobrium upon that which they would gladly disprove if they could ;—but it stands *erect*, “fast by the oracles of God,” and should be received *just as it is*, without having some repulsive image and superscription (which never *mean* anything) placed over it, as an invidious interpreter. If it is what it claims to be,—a fair representation of the doctrine as revealed in the Scriptures,—whatever metaphysical theory it may lack, it is properly denominated *a Biblical Trinity*.

Should we, then, continue to use the *language* commonly employed in writing and speaking on the subject ? Just so far as that language conveniently, correctly, and properly expresses the truths revealed and the thoughts we wish to communicate respecting it, without attempting thereby to teach what God has *not* revealed concerning himself. But much of the language formerly employed in the schools, and in the ancient formulas of faith still received “for substance of doctrine,” goes, in its true and proper meaning, *far*



*beyond* the record. There are very many who do not use *all* the language of the schools,—such as that respecting *eternal generation, eternal procession*, and the like,—who yet contend earnestly that they are “*The Orthodox.*” They are so, if holding more than the Bible reveals, gives them a just title to that name. But if the *Athanasian Creed*, and not the Bible, be the only true standard of Orthodoxy; then—to adopt the language of one of their own number, who used it in application to a brother who did not hold his view of “real, substantial, eternal distinctions in the one undivided essence of the Godhead”—they are “only *semi-Orthodox.*” To be regarded by some men as being “Orthodox,” is of much less importance than—in the exercise of that charity which the gospel requires toward those who entertain different views of Divine truth from our own—to *receive and hold the truth as it is revealed*, and therefore, *as God approves.*

The Rev. John Robinson, of Leyden, in taking leave of those of his Pilgrim congregation who were about to embark for the wilds of America, gave them, among other excellent counsels, the following salutary advice: “I must also advise you to abandon, avoid, and shake off the name of *Brownists*; it is a *mere nick-name, and a brand for making religion, and the professors of it, odious to the Christian world.*”<sup>\*</sup> The sooner Christians generally imbibe the *spirit* of this wholesome advice, and act in accordance with it,

<sup>\*</sup> Neal's Hist. of Purit., Am. ed. 8vo., 1817, v. 2, p. 147.

the better will it be for the cause of truth and religion in the world.

But the doctrine of the Trinity is claimed to be a *mystery*, which is to be received submissively, in some form of the common theory, and into which it is not lawful to inquire. One writer has remarked, that "it is a *staggering* mystery, how three Persons can be one God ; but it stands propounded in the Bible [not quite so clear], and it will be no less a mystery, *though we reason and dispute about it to all eternity.*" This latter statement is strictly true, if, with our present capacities and present knowledge on the subject, the common theory is to be defended so long. That theory is a mystery, unfathomable as the abyss ; but it is a mystery of *man's own creating*. Not the Bible, but human philosophy is responsible for it. They who introduced it into Christian Theology, and they who have received and *carried out* that false philosophy, in all its sad results to the peace of the church and to the lives and the souls of men, contrary to the spirit and the principles of the Gospel,—are responsible for what they have done. Many have received and held it, in ignorance of its real origin, character and tendencies, "knowing no better way to explain it," and supposing the truths actually revealed in the Scriptures could not be rightly understood or sustained without it ; many, because they have been always taught it, and because it has been *associated* in their minds with precious revealed truths which they have cherished as the life of their souls ; and many, because they preferred to hold

it in silence as a mystery, rather than incur such opprobrium and such a breaking up of connections long held dear, as they think would inevitably result from openly rejecting a mere *theory*, which they regard as inconsistent, or absurd.

But the doctrine of the Trinity, *as taught in the Scriptures*, is no more mysterious than a great many *other* truths which are plainly revealed there. What is actually *revealed* respecting it, God, who revealed it with a perfect knowledge of man's powers of comprehension, meant he should understand. *It would be reproaching him to say otherwise.* An alleged fact, or anything acknowledged as truth, is either mysterious or absurd, which apparently *contradicts* another acknowledged fact, or another known truth. But simple *ignorance* of a relative truth or fact, is not sufficient to constitute a mystery. A man may be ignorant whether Athens is in Greece or Italy, and of the time when the Nicene Council assembled; but either of them may be easily ascertained, and is no mystery; it is a case of simple ignorance. But if it should be claimed, on good and sufficient authority, that a ton of iron rested in the air for some hours, fifty feet from the earth,—*contrary* to the principle or *known law* of gravitation, and without any known cause of the phenomenon,—here would be a *mystery*; which can be explained only by proving (or at least assuming) a miracle; otherwise, it is a plain absurdity.

It is revealed, and therefore a *known truth*, that there is but one God. Now, *if it were plainly re-*

*vealed in the Scriptures*, that there are three eternal and personal Distinctions, or three Persons, in the *nature* of this one God,—“three distinct and competent moral agents” so “united in one substratum” as to constitute one Being—one God; here would be a *mystery*; i. e. “something incomprehensible or unintelligible”—something, according to the common sense of men, *contradictory* to a plain, *known truth*. In *such case*, we could say with Dr. Watts, that “we would subdue all our curiosity to faith, and submit our wandering and doubtful imaginations, *as far as it was possible*, to the holy and wise determinations of God’s word,” without any attempt at explanation; for, that which is not revealed concerning God, *man* cannot reveal, or explain. But if it is *not* so revealed, and if what *is* revealed (understood in a more simple and natural way), is consistent with known truth, and quite *intelligible*—as much so as revealed truths in general, then the doctrine or statement of such Distinctions or Persons in the nature of God, is not a mystery, but a plain absurdity. Should it be claimed that the theory in question is a fair *inference* from what is revealed; then, if the inference be *revealed*, the alleged *truth* is revealed; but if not revealed, then it rests on mere *human authority*.

But the *Scripture* sense of the word *mystery*, is different from the common one. *Campbell* remarks, in his Dissertation on *Mystery*, “that this (the *Scripture* sense) is *totally different* from the *current sense* of the English word *mystery*—something incompre-

hensible.”\* He further says : “ I can only find two senses, nearly related to each other, which can strictly be called scriptural. The *first*, and what I may call the leading sense of the word, is *arcanum*, a *secret*, anything not disclosed, not published to the world, though perhaps communicated to a select number.” This is that “mystery,” of which Paul says he “was made a minister,”—“which in other ages was *not made known* unto the sons of men, as it is *now revealed* unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; *that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*”—(Eph. 3 : 3–9). Till *revealed*, these truths were “the *unsearchable* riches of Christ;” but when *made known* by this apostle and others, they were to be *searched into*, and understood.

As to the *other* scriptural meaning of mystery, Campbell remarks : “The word is sometimes employed to denote the *figurative* sense, as distinguished from the literal, which is conveyed under any fable, parable, allegory, symbolical action, representation, dream or vision. . . . ‘To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables.’—(Mark 4 : 11). The Apostles were *let into the secret*, and got the spiritual sense of the similitude, whilst the multitude amused themselves with the letter, and searched no further.”

\* So Barnes, on Eph. 1 : 9.

Respecting the passage in 1 Tim. 3 : 16,—“the great mystery of godliness,”—the same author justly observes, that “the purport of the sentence plainly is, ‘Great unquestionably is the Divine *secret*, of which our religion brings the *discovery* ; God was manifest in the flesh,’ ” &c.

The word *mystery* is not, in the Scriptures, applied to the subject of the Trinity, nor is “the current sense” of the word to be found there ; at least, in the New Testament. This doctrine, *as revealed in the Bible*, is no more mysterious than many other truths revealed there, and which were evidently intended to be understood. But scholastic philosophy often *makes* mystery of truths which are plainly revealed ; or rather, converts them into an absurdity. For example : It is clearly revealed, as well as a dictate of common sense, that man is both *free* and *dependent*—truths easily understood. But these truths are converted into a mystery, by that philosophy which makes him free and dependent in the *same particulars*. We have been told that a clergyman, many years ago, made the following statement on this subject : “that nothing can be free in *that particular* in which it is dependent ; or, dependent in *that particular* in which it is free ;—any more than black can be white in *that particular* in which it is black ; or, than white can be black in *that particular* in which it is white.” This is plain, common-sense truth ; and when understood, it seems to be self-evident. The mystery, therefore, claimed to be constituted by the coëxistence of human freedom and

dependence in the *same particular*, is not a mystery, but a plain absurdity ; made such, by scholastic philosophy. In like manner, to claim that three distinct and competent human agents are but one man, and three distinct and competent Divine agents are but one God, are alike contradictory ; and, if *not so revealed*, then plainly absurd.

All which is needful for man to know concerning God, in order that he may understand and do his duty and be supremely happy, is intelligibly revealed. It would be casting reproach on his Maker to affirm it to be otherwise. What, therefore, is not revealed, is not *thus* needful ; and no cloud of mystery thrown over any part of revelation by the inventions of men, however well intended, does any service to man or honor to God. If a knowledge of three Persons in the *nature* of God were needful for us, common sense decides that the God of the Bible would have revealed it so clearly, that it would not then have resulted, as the common theory has done from the first, in endless contention *among his own people* ; thus invading the peace of the church, and doing great dishonor to religion. As he has not so revealed it in his word, it becomes us all to *leave the subject where God has left it*.

On the subject of *Creeds*, we have but a few words to say. Properly constructed, they are good and important in their place ; but as they are, in themselves considered, of mere human authority, they cannot, without gross usurpation, be put in the place of the Bible. The following language of Prof. Stuart, sup-

posed to express the views of the great body of believers, is very much to the purpose : “ First of all, we do sincerely believe in the great Protestant maxim, that THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE SUFFICIENT AND ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE. We do not regard them as secondary and inferior, or a mere supplementary edition of the laws of nature. What they reveal, we take as our creed, *our only creed*.”\* This is as it should be. But if so, then a *human* Creed, to be received by the brotherhood, should contain *only what the Scriptures reveal* ; leaving to those who are to receive and adopt it as their own, that right of private judgment as to the mode of explaining revealed truth and those rights of conscience, which God has given alike to all—to one as much as to another. Nor has scholastic philosophy a Divine right to a place in the common Creed of any brotherhood ; nor has any human authority a right to put it there, and then treat the subject as if it were binding upon the conscience. The final appeal should be made, not to the *Creed* into which that philosophy has been so wrought as to become a part of its texture ; but to the *Holy Scriptures*. Some may *think* that philosophy, as a method of explanation and defense of revealed truth, is in accordance with the word of God. Others *think* differently ; and one has the right of private judgment in the case, as much as another. The appeal should therefore be made, as the *last* resort,—not to what has been “ commonly re-

\* *Miscellanies*, p. 346.



ceived," or "always so understood," but—to the BIBLE. For, the human mind is at least as well qualified now to understand and interpret that holy book, as it was fifteen hundred years ago.

Some persons may think that this would set everything afloat, and may consider it a matter of rejoicing that there is "*one church*" which has "*a fixed Creed*;" even though that Creed embodies much antique philosophy which has for centuries been enforced by civil and ecclesiastical power, and such assumption of "*Divine right*," as naturally excludes the great body of believers from the fellowship of the Christian brotherhood. There is, however, no *fixed creed* but the *Bible*. Human creeds have changed, as often as "*every moon*." Many things which the fathers honestly received and held as the truth, have long since been set afloat; and others will doubtless follow them. The best way to have a fixed *human Creed*, is, to embody, in simple language, *no more* than the Scriptures plainly reveal.

But our business at present is with the doctrine under consideration. What language, then, will express simply what the Scriptures reveal on the subject of the Trinity? "*A Descendant of the Pilgrims*" has given us an article on this subject, which, he says, some of the churches in the land of the "*first comers*," have used for "*these hundred years*;" and which they profess that "*they believe, without attempting to explain*:"—"God is revealed in the Scriptures as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to each

is attributable the same Divine properties and perfections.”\* This is well expressed, in the main ; and it keeps clear of that philosophy which we have seen introduced into an article on the same subject, in another Confession of Faith ; and which runs thus : “ We believe that there is in *the nature of God, a foundation laid for the distinction* of three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Who was ever Divinely authorized to introduce such philosophy—the result of dialectic subtilty—into a Confession of Faith to be received and adopted by plain, common-sense men as *revealed truth*, or else to be themselves excluded from the communion and fellowship of a Christian church ? When will theorizers in theology, and they who use what is already prepared to their hands, in forming a Confession of Faith for the common reception of the brotherhood, learn not to put into it *that* of which they know nothing,—thus requiring assent to what is not *revealed as truth*,—but to *keep themselves strictly WITHIN the boundaries of human knowledge* ?

On this topic we would only add, in the language of another : “ Our belief is that the churches must go back, and make more of the BIBLE, and less of Creeds, in order to revive the spirit of the primitive ages of Christianity. When they shall be as anxious to promote brotherly harmony, and kindness, and true liberality, as they have for a long time been to inflame sectarian zeal, and increase the causes of dissension by

\* The Independent, Feb. 21, 1850, p. 1.

sectarian creeds, and to treat with severity and contempt or reproach those who differ from them in matters unessential ; then will the world once more be constrained to say : See *how these Christians love one another !* Then, to use the last words of the adorable Savior, ‘ will they all be one ;’ and then (but not till then) ‘ will the world believe that Christ is sent by the Father.’ ”\*

We come now to inquire : How they who honestly entertain *different views* of revealed truth, should treat each other, *on the ground* of that difference ? and, How far the exhibition of *a life becoming the gospel*, on the part of those who thus differ, should affect their *judgment and treatment* of each other, as Christians or as the ministers of Christ ? These are practical questions of serious import ; for, the cause of truth, the honor of religion, and the salvation of men, are deeply concerned in the matter. We cannot, however, go into extended remarks on the subject, but must be as brief as possible ; leaving a more full discussion of it, to others.

It is worthy of special consideration, that they who hold any *part* of scholasticism as essential to revealed truth, are apt to be less charitable toward their brethren who reject the part which they still *retain*, than they are toward those who *pertinaciously hold* that part of it which they themselves regard as *erroneous*, and of *injurious tendency* ; the *more* scholastic, being

\* Stuart's Miscell., p. 75.

most intolerant toward those who are *less* so than themselves. This shows the bad influence of regarding human philosophy as essential to Divine truth—either as a part of it, or as necessary to its defense. It is a fact which has often arrested the attention of the men of the world, that Christian denominations—even brethren of the *same* denomination—whose difference of opinion is comparatively small, frequently seem to be the most warmly opposed to each other. Doubtless the observation of such facts as these gave occasion for the remark of an eminent statesman of England, that “The opposition of Christian sects to each other is *inversely as the squares of their distances.*” This remark is but too often verified. “When the Swiss reformers as the Conference of Marbourg sued for peace and union, Luther repelled them. . . . . When the English exiles fled from the bloody scepter of Mary, they were, at the instigation of Lutheran *theologians*, repulsed in mid-winter from Copenhagen, Rostoch, Lubec and Hamburg, where they sought an asylum; with a—‘rather a Papist than a Calvinist.’ The Lutherans were wont to call their cats and dogs by the name of Calvin.”\* But we need not go so far back, or so far off, in order to find the same bigoted intolerance attempting to sustain itself by the excision of a large portion of the church,—men who presumed to think and interpret the Scriptures for themselves; or by the cry of heresy, uttered in every variety of form,—

\* N. E. Puritan, April 9, 1846.

remonstrance, public testimony, accusation, prosecution,—instead of *Scripture argument and brotherly love*. Protestations of harboring no *ill will* against the accused, and of *painful regret* in feeling themselves called upon to take such a position, only make the matter worse. “*Ye know not what spirit ye are of.*” The drapery is too thin to conceal the nakedness beneath it.

They who honestly entertain different views of *revealed truth*, so long as they hold that truth itself (not scholasticism or infidelity in its stead), and exhibit a life conformed to the gospel, should not be visited with any ecclesiastical or fraternal disabilities. Otherwise, it becomes *bigotry* and *wrong doing*, employed to promote what is claimed to be the cause of truth and righteousness. But *real* truth and righteousness need no such helpers. Do you say, it is not oppression, because they are at perfect liberty to do as they please, and you do as you please and feel bound to do? But theirs is only “the liberty of necessity.” So Archbishop *Cranmer* had perfect liberty to do as *he* pleased—either to recant, or to be burnt. He first chose the former, and then the latter. The definition of liberty given by Sir *James Mackintosh*, against which we have seen no valid objection made, is this: “Liberty consists in security against wrong.” Have *they*, who are thus prevented from enjoying the common privileges of the brotherhood and from serving Christ as they desire to do, “*security against wrong?*” The wrong is actually perpetrated, by the very means which are em-

ployed to maintain scholastic views of Bible truth. Our Lord and Master has not authorized us to reject any one *who receives Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, and follows him*. If there is found in him "some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel" and toward his Son Jesus, let us not "forbid him" a place in the church or in the pulpit, "because he followeth not with us;" but rather welcome him in *either* place,—according to what he is,—as a brother in Christ.

What minister of the word is authorized by his Master, to close his pulpit against his brother, because he does not receive scholasticism into his creed; and then stand forth on the *platform*, and plead, in glowing eloquence, for "*Christian Union*" among all who love our Lord Jesus Christ: including among them, very many who still hold those *scholastic views* of truth, which a large portion of intelligent, humble, and devoted Christians have long since discarded, and which he himself rejects. It needs more than a microscopic eye, to see the consistency of such doings. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." The question then will not be, whether, in this world, we held the scholastic views of truth, or rejected them: whether, by the wise ones, we were called *orthodox*, or *heterodox*: but more probably, whether we loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and walked humbly before God; and whether, in obedience to our Master, we habitually exercised due

charity toward the whole brotherhood of believers, and were conscientiously and faithfully engaged with the requisite self-denial, in "*doing* the will of our Father who is in heaven." Doubtless many things of absorbing interest here,—many which now engross the energies of the church and rend asunder "the body of Christ," to the grief of his friends and the joy of his enemies,—will then be seen to have been the offspring of human ignorance and unsanctified zeal, and *worthless as a bubble*.

Opposite parties in-religion have for centuries rendered their respective names as odious to each other, by their assumptions and uncharitableness, as Robinson says those did, "to the Christian world," who cherished the name of "Brownists," in the days of the Pilgrims. It is time that all—of whatever name—who have departed from the plain, simple teachings of revelation,—whether to the right hand or to the left,—and have been guided by the darkness of scholasticism, or the pride of reasoning, and thus provoked each the other to make the retort of Job to his friends, "No doubt ye are the people," should *get back to the Scriptures of truth*. Among the various opinions which have been formed of Divine truth, whether they who have held more or they who have held less than the Scriptures reveal, are most in the wrong, is a question not of the *first* importance; but rather, *how to get back*, as soon as possible—whatever the distance to be passed over may be—to the line of truth and charity marked out by the Bible. This would

doubtless be a lesson of humility to all parties ; yet one which it would do them no injury to learn *practically* ; but on the contrary, it would have a salutary influence upon all who shall prove to be faithful disciples, and upon the cause of truth and piety ; as well as be honorable to God and the gospel of his Son. They need not lay aside all distinctive names ; nor should they judge each other by classes ; but let each individual be regarded, by all the rest, according to *his own belief and practice*, rather than the merit or demerit of a name, or a class. Casting the blame on one another, and using names *offensively*, will not promote the truth as it is in Jesus, nor exemplify true piety or godlike charity. They may have names, for convenience sake, and *use* them *as names*, without assuming that any name includes all the truth or all the liberality in the Christian world ; not using them for purposes of caste, like the mutually odious names of rival parties in politics : but, on the contrary, let their names be used like those of *The Bible Society*, and *The Missionary Society*—significant, convenient, and alike honorable, because of the *principles embodied* and the *work done*, for the cause of our glorious Redeemer. When these things shall be exemplified before earth and heaven, by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, then will they, as *one body*, and in *their several denominations*, present to the world the beauty and the harmony of truth and love, as imaged forth concerning the above-named Societies in the following expressive language of the poet Montgomery :



“In the Bible Society all names and distinctions of sect are blended till they are lost, like the prismatic colors in a ray of pure and perfect light. In the Missionary work, though divided, they are not discordant; but, like the same colors, displayed and harmonious in the rainbow, they form an arch of glory—ascending on the one hand from earth to heaven, and on the other descending from heaven to earth—a bow of promise, a covenant of peace, a sign that the storm is passing away, and the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings, breaking forth on all nations.”

## CHAPTER V.

### CONCLUSION.

HAVING thus treated of the various matters which have come before us, let us now consider the natural result to which the foregoing examination brings us—the conclusion of the whole matter. In so doing, we will inquire; *What is the difference between the Trinity of the Scriptures and the common theory of the Trinity?*

The *former* of these makes known to us the one only living and true God,—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—revealed to man in different capacities and relations for the work of redemption. Whether revealed as the Father, as God in Christ, or as the Holy Spirit, he is the same unchangeable Jehovah. By whatever terms, or combination of terms, the Supreme Being is on any occasion designated, he is one and the same God,—though manifesting himself variously, according to the various exigencies to be provided for,—and all-sufficient for every work needful and proper to be done; whether a work actually performed by his own direct and gracious agency, or by his Son, or by any created

beings whom he sees fit to employ in carrying on and carrying out the purposes of his grace. This God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is that Divine Being who performs all Divine works whatsoever. It is HE who "dwelleth" in the Son (whether called the Son of man or Son of God—the *Messiah*), and who "doeth the work" by or through him: "for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" and "there is none other God but one." This is the God of the Bible—the *Godhead as revealed to man*. From this revelation are derived all the great and glorious truths of redemption by Jesus Christ—a work on which depends the salvation of men—a work for which, as *one* great end, all things were made—a work which reflects the highest glory of the eternal God, to the everlasting admiration of the intelligent universe.

The common theory of the Trinity, in both its forms, *superadds* to what is plainly revealed, the *inventions of men*, for the truth; yet honestly intended to explain—as God has not seen fit to do—what is left unrevealed; and what, therefore, cannot be necessary for man to know or believe in order that he may do his duty, and obtain everlasting life. This has been thought to be necessary in order to defend the truth actually revealed, from the assaults of error; as though God's own word—the truth itself uttered on *his* authority—could not "stand" and prevail, without "the wisdom of men" to sustain it and give it efficacy. Have we yet to learn that "Christ [the blessed truth

which comes to men through his mediation] is the wisdom of God, and the power of God?" and that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men?" If "the wisdom of men" is necessary to supply some deficiency in Divine revelation, how does it appear "that *no flesh* [no man or class of men] should *glory* in his presence?" We are divinely taught, "that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." So *let* it stand, and prevail; and let all the glory redound to *Him* who is the exhaustless fountain of truth and love!

But the *Monotheistic* form of the common theory presents us with three real and eternal *distinctions* in the nature of God, corresponding to what he has revealed of himself in the work of redemption, and supposed to be certain properties or attributes not revealed in his holy word, yet *inferentially* set forth as indicating the mode of the Divine existence; the Godhead, however, possessing only one set of Divine attributes, *common* to the Three. The *Tritheistic* form presents us with three *Persons* in the *nature* of God, each having his own distinct Divine attributes—three distinct and competent Divine agents united in one substratum, and forming infinitely blessed society in the Divine mind. A certain writer has been supposed by some to have advanced a little, and *but* a little, upon this representation of the subject; as in the following language: "The infinite Father can find no companion among the children of men. . . . He must have dwelt in soli-

tary grandeur, but for this holy and rapturous communion with his august *brethren* of the Trinity. What desolation would pervade the courts of heaven, reaching even to the sanctuary of Him 'who sitteth upon the throne,' could a ruthless arm of flesh pluck from his right hand and his left the beloved *fellows* of his glorious reign!"\* Again: "The Holy Ghost is recounting the sufferings and death of his *fellow God*."†

Now, in view of the foregoing discussion, we would ask: *Which of the two—a Biblical Trinity, or the common theory of the Trinity in either of its forms—is plainly revealed in the word of God?* Which is addressed to common sense; and which, to sectarian bigotry? Which is the production of Divine knowledge and wisdom; and which, in its *peculiarity*—for that which is *common* to the two *has nothing to do with the question*—is the offspring of human ignorance and folly? What, then, is the difference between the two, but this: *The former came down from heaven; the latter came forth from the schools? the one is light: the other, darkness?*

The doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in the Scriptures, is intelligible, consistent, and free from scholastic mysticism; but it has been "*spoiled* [corrupted] through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For, in him dwelleth ALL the fullness of the

\* The Sufferings of Christ. By a Layman. 2d ed., p. 19.

† Id. p. 305.

Godhead bodily." If any "cannot see it so," it may be well they should be reminded, that it is easier to present truth clearly before the mind, than it is to furnish eyes to see it; especially, when the eye of common sense, with the light of revelation, is amply sufficient. It is enough for us, then, that we receive the doctrine simply as the Scriptures make it known, speak on the subject in much the same way in which the Bible speaks, and *there leave it*,—faithfully doing the will of God,—till he shall see fit, in some period or other of our existence, to make known *other* truths concerning himself, which are now hidden from our view.

But we do not expect that any great and sudden change, in the views generally prevalent on the subject of the Trinity, will be produced by the discussion in which we have been engaged; for no *single* mind, though it were gifted with natural powers equal to any ever bestowed on man, could be expected to bring about such a change. In any case of this kind, it must take *time* for intelligent conviction to be wrought in the public mind, and for that mind, under its present embarrassments, to work itself free from scholastic errors long and fondly cherished as a part of Divine truth, associated with the pious feelings, incorporated with all the habits of thinking and speaking on the subject, and entering minutely into the interpretation of so large a portion of the word of God. The author of *Saturday Evening* has somewhere given another reason, particularly applicable to this subject, in the general and truthful statement which follows: "We may, at any time, find

*ten* men who have discernment and ingenuousness enough to discover and acknowledge their *personal* faults; sooner than *one* man, who has the greatness of mind to perceive and confess the faults of the SYSTEM under which he has been reared, and *which he stands PLEDGED to support.*" Most of those who are *taught*, are very apt to think much as their teacher does; especially, if he inculcates his "system" with ability.

Nor are we attempting, in our retirement, to erect a standard which may serve as the rallying point of a new *party* in Theology. We have only sought to present the simple truth as revealed in God's holy word; leaving it to every man, as his sacred birth-right, to *think, judge, and act for himself.*

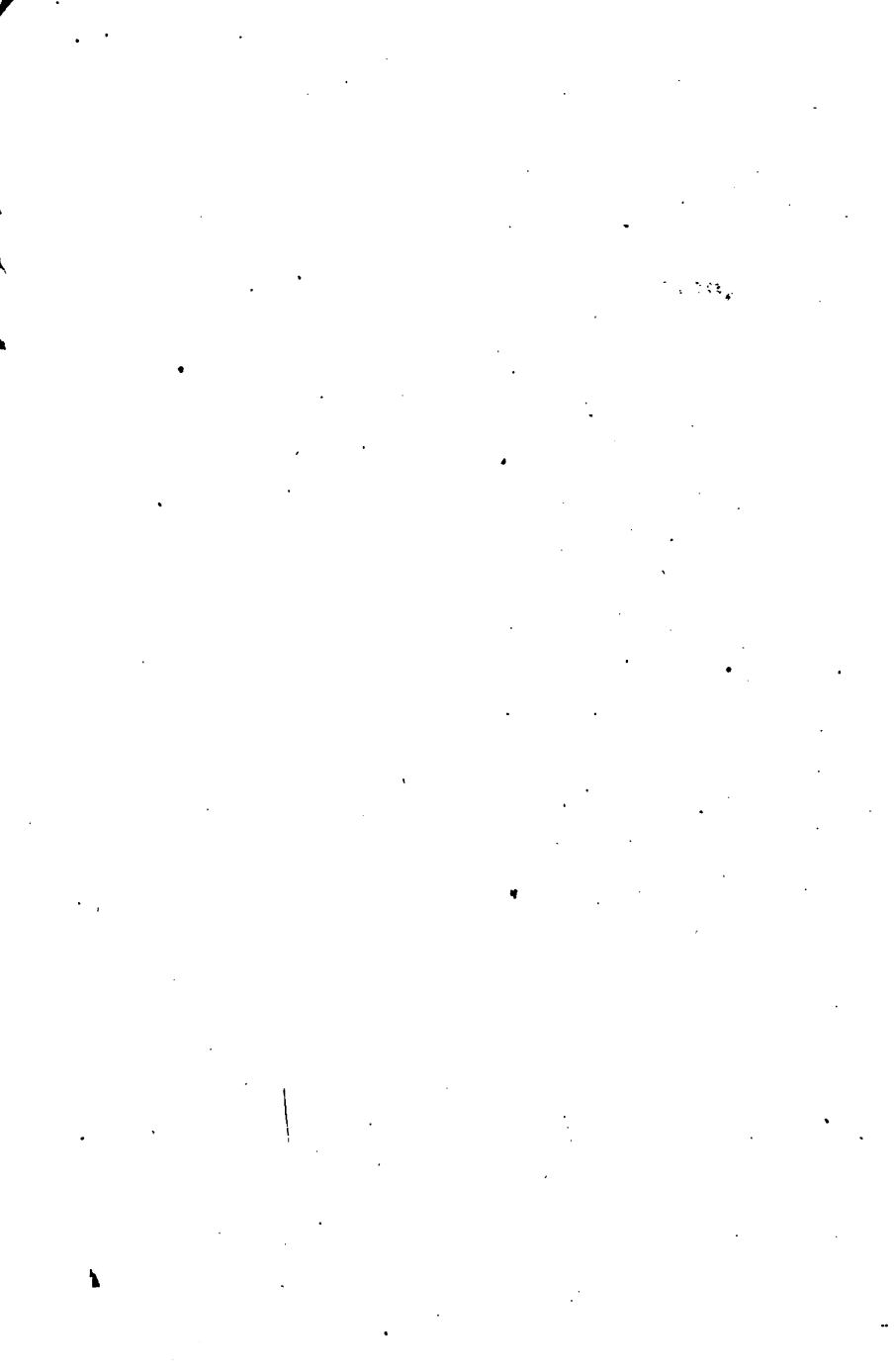
But of this we feel confident, that a Biblical Trinity is not "the Ghost of an old heresy which lived and died some fifteen hundred years ago." Whatever the name may be, by which it may be called, *that* does not change the nature of the *thing*. Though it should be rejected and despised by many, it may *reappear*, till it shall fully bring to light the violence done to Revelation, under the pretext of vindicating its truth. That simple truth we would receive; claiming for ourselves and granting to others the right of private judgment and the common rights of conscience, and remembering our infinite obligations to *Him* who, "for us men and for our salvation," has revealed himself in various ways, but especially as THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST.

He did not appear Sunday, Jan. 19, 1920.









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